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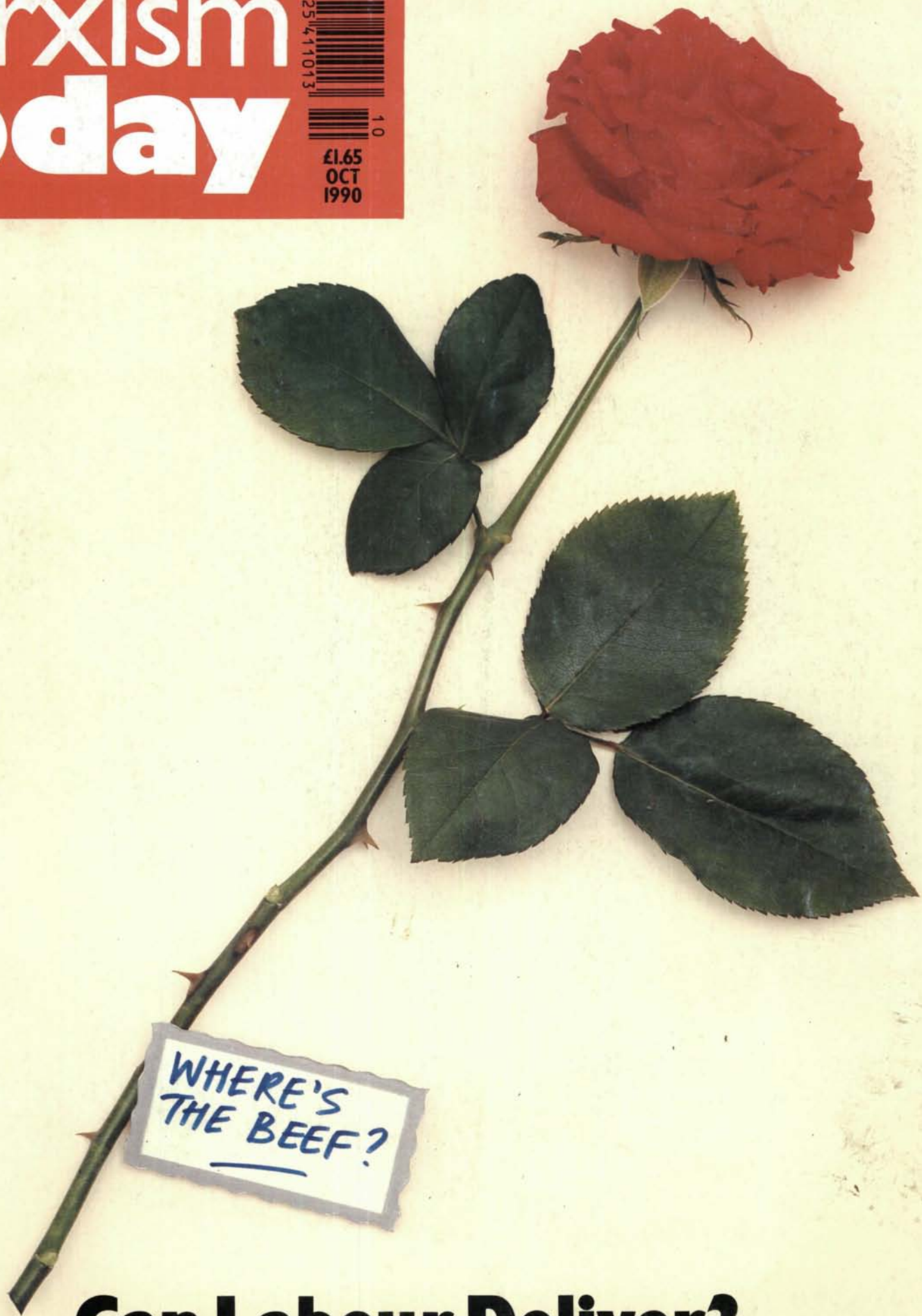

Can Labour Deliver?

Plus: Special Survey of the New World Order with Eric Hobsbawm, Martin Walker & Fred Halliday.

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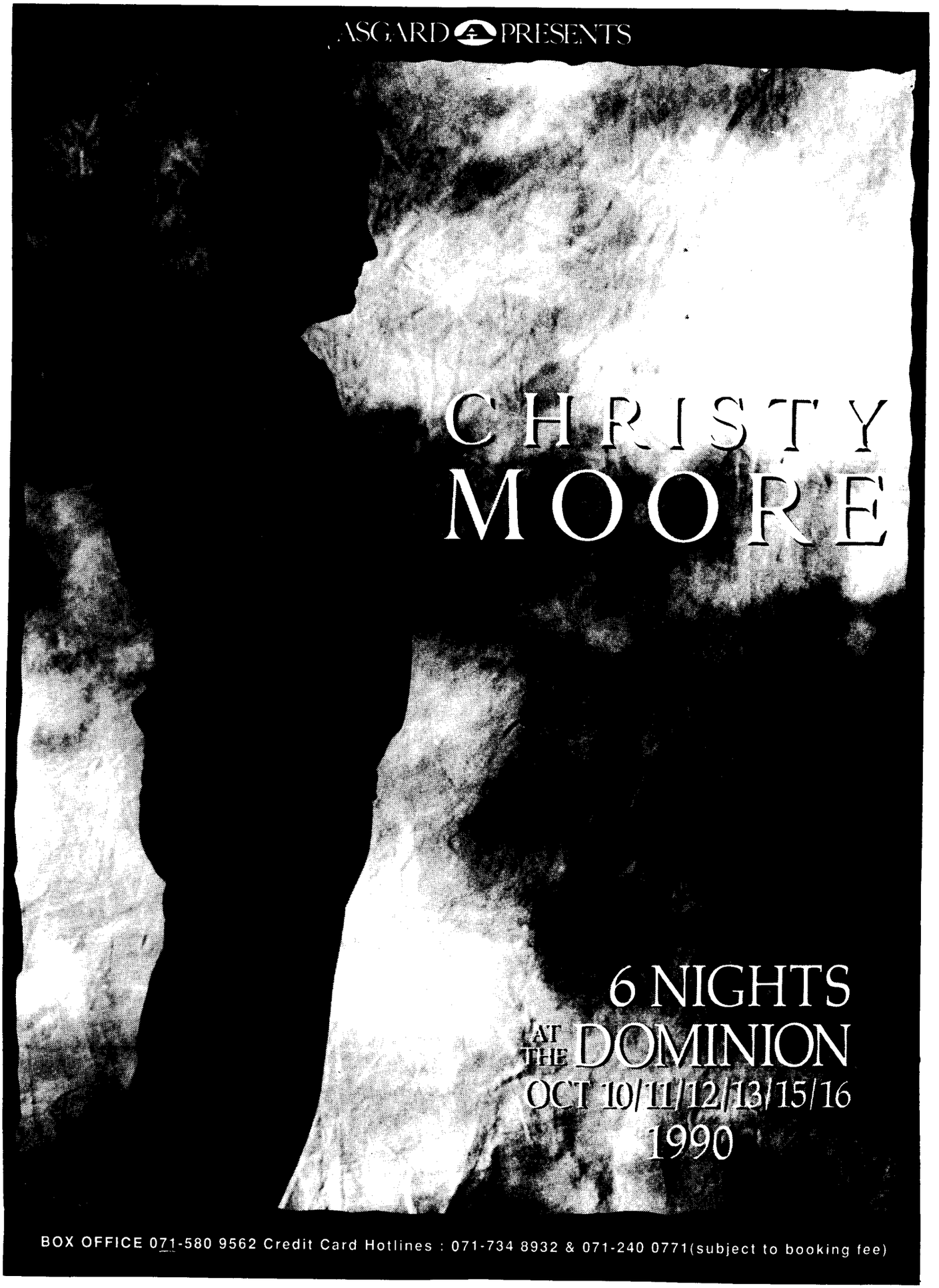

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Martin Jacques on Labour's prospects

The Mild Bunch

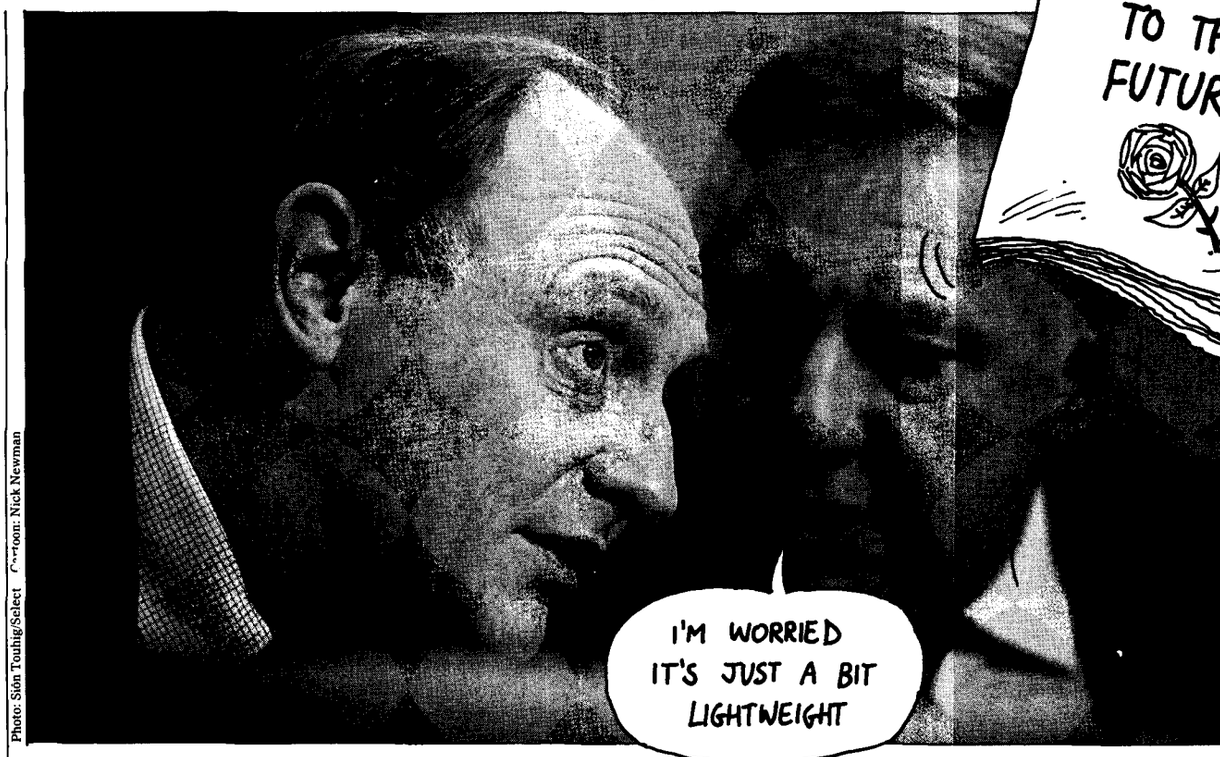

Photo: Sión Touhig/Select Cartoon: Nick Newman

Domestic politics may, for the moment, have been somewhat overshadowed by events in the Gulf, but the party conference season serves as a reminder that Labour is back with a vengeance. The miserable days of the early 80s when Labour was divided, appeared obsolescent and was under desperate pressure from the Alliance now seem like a bad memory.

Much of the credit for this transformation must go to Neil Kinnock. The turnaround has been remarkable. A new sense of unity and purpose has been forged. The party is in the midst of historic constitutional changes; a new team of competent leaders occupies Labour's front bench; and policies which were both sacred and a liability have been ditched. The policy review shows that Labour has begun to think anew and flex intellectual muscles which have for long been inactive, while nobody can doubt that Labour has learned the art of public relations.

Labour, in short, is back in business. For many months now it has led the Conservatives in the opinion polls. Although victory in the next election represents a formidable challenge, it is by no means inconceivable. Who could have said that in 1987? Yet the transformation in Labour, remarkable as it is, leaves something to be desired. It may be clear what Labour is not, but it is far from clear what Labour actually is. The policy review was not simply an exercise in burying unpopular commitments, but the new too often remains vague and woolly.

Of course, Labour's task is not easy. The whole of the European Left is obliged to rethink much of what not so long ago it took for granted. No one expects Labour to solve problems which will take years to answer. A new social-democratic vision which can substitute for that of 1945 remains as elusive as ever. But short of that, Labour must have something distinctive to offer. Saying as little as possible while relying on the Tories to cock things up is not a sufficient recipe for victory.

Labour under Kinnock has demonstrated enormous political courage in its internal affairs. But when it comes to the wider political argument it remains timid in the extreme. It has finally begun to move along the European road. Yet its europeanism remains half-baked and too often opportunist. It has yet to take the final plunge and say openly, as Edward Heath has long said, that curtailing Britain's sovereignty in the cause of European union is not only inevitable but also desirable.

Or take Labour's response to the end of the cold war, which has been thoroughly uninspiring. Here is one of the great moments of the century and yet Labour has had virtually nothing to say except the obvious. Its contribution to a pretty puny national debate has been almost non-existent. Yet the implications for Britain's foreign and defence policy are enormous. One can understand Labour's reticence on matters to do with defence, given its experience in the last two elections, but silence will get nowhere, not least because it suggests a lack of thought.

These are but two symptoms of a wider malaise. Labour needs to bite the intellectual bullet. The policy review was a good idea. But it was a beginning not an end. Moreover, the latest version, published in the early summer, marks a significant retreat on that of a year ago. Blandness and safety have replaced enquiry and exploration.

If Labour is to win the next election it cannot rely on a nice image and a feeling that 12 or 13 years of Tory government are enough. It has to stand for something. What is more, unless Labour manages to come up with a distinctive agenda of its own, one cannot entertain very high hopes for what a Labour government might be like in practice. Even if it succeeds in climbing the greasy pole to power with a friendly smile, sharp public relations, good anti-Tory rhetoric and the apposite slogan, that will count for little once in office. ●

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EYE TO EYE

Bea Campbell explores policing in the 90s

A Fair Cop

John Newing is chief constable of the Derbyshire constabulary

The police everywhere are the object of enormous criticism and public dissatisfaction.
Public satisfaction with all services has deteriorated, maybe because people are more questioning, more aware of their rights.

So what do you feel as a chief constable about what kind of room for manoeuvre you have about exactly those issues that concern the public now? For instance, how would you have dealt with a corrupt unit in your constabulary or force? Your colleague in the West Midlands couldn't sack anybody, so he had to disband the unit. That's a ridiculous situation, isn't it?
You need evidence first, like every thing else, if you have a suspicion that people are corrupt then you need to investigate it.

Who should investigate it?
Now you're really getting to the crunch! The Police Federation would now prefer to see an independent unit. But I am not sure that it would necessarily be any more effective. You have to try to instil a wider loyality than to the service itself, which means you have got to make them see the general public in a different light.

And how do they see them at the moment?
There are elements within the police force that see the public as the problem not the customer. We are starting to view ourselves as much more of a service than a force. Force is part of the service, providing it is done properly, lawfully. We now need another Royal Commission or something equivalent to determine what it is society wants its police service to deliver. Crime is about society; it is not about policing.

What would your view be of the law and order lobby, whose response to their fear of crime is to want to reinforce you lot, get you back on the streets?
What they are looking for is not the exercise of more force but reassurance. They would like to see more bobbies on foot or on bicycles where they can get at them. It might reduce public nuisance, and it is very often the rowdy youngsters on the street going home late at night that troubles people.

Is that telling us something about what people's ordinary experience is? The fear of going out at night, for instance. For years and years people mocked women's fear in particular, but it is serious if people's freedom of movement is curtailed.
It is the quality of life that should concern us. That's what the police service should be addressing. We can not have a society where we have a police officer on every corner of every street. That would be oppressive.

Police state?
It would be like an occupying army. Eventually people have to rule themselves. And that is why we have seen this quest to get people more involved in crime prevention, why you have Neighbourhood Watch.

Does any of that stuff work?
I have yet to see any real evidence that it has longterm value, because crime continues to rise.

So what is producing the rise in crime?
I wish I knew. You could say that if there is an increase in drinking then you get an increase in crime, but that begs a question, because drinking is usually symptomatic of something. Another possible factor could be that people are being pushed towards wanting things.

We have lived through a decade in which the gaps between some people's economic resources and other people's resources has increased.
You have to have a catalyst to make that a factor in crime, how else do you explain the many people who are not well off, who are law-abiding and all the people who *are* well off, who are criminally inclined?

What kind of crime do you think we need to be prioritising?
I suspect the police professional view will be murder, serious sexual crimes and rape, buggery, indecency with kids.

Let's take sexual abuse. How much police time are we prepared to devote to an investigation that may never lead to a prosecution, because as we know, sexual abuse leads to very few prosecutions? What kind of budgetary pressure is there on somebody like you to withdraw resources from something you might think was very important, but is going to consume a lot of policing time?
We will find the resources, at the expense of something else, because they have a high priority. There will come a time in any investigation when you ask the question: are we going to get a result?

And what is a result?
Identifying the person responsible, acquiring the evidence to put that person before a court.

So a prosecution is the result.
No. Most police officers would say a conviction is a result.

What's your view of the notion about, for instance, sex offenders, that punishment doesn't do anything to reconstruct their relationship to the victims?
Punishment generally has no rehabilitating effect on offenders at all.

But if you are into crime prevention then rehabilitation is important.
We should look to different ways of dealing with people. We lock too many people up now.

We live in a punishment culture.
Yes. And yet we are supposed to be a Christian society, and Christianity is based upon forgiveness.

Are you a Christian?
Practising, no. Emotionally, I like to think so.

There have been a number of very serious cases that have discredited the police, like the Guildford Four. What do you think about that case, about the length of time it has taken to resolve itself?
They were there for a long time, but isn't it inevitable in a case like this that the government, the institutions concerned, are going to be reluctant to admit any mistakes? The only good thing in this case is that capital punishment has been abolished.

But what has really given the police a bad name has been active bad behaviour rather than slobby bad behaviour. How would you get rid of the baddies?
There are strong arguments in favour of saying that constructive dismissal should be on the basis of most other professions, where you dismiss a person on the balance of probability. But if you do that, it is even more important that an independent element be involved.

Is it going to happen?
Constructive dismissal for inefficiency will take place in due course. The change to balance of probability is more doubtful.

Can it work without it?
Not in my view.

You have just emerged from the Met. It's an overwhelmingly masculine force and, if last year's figures are anything to go by, whiter than ever. Forty-two black recruits but 44 black people resigning. This is very

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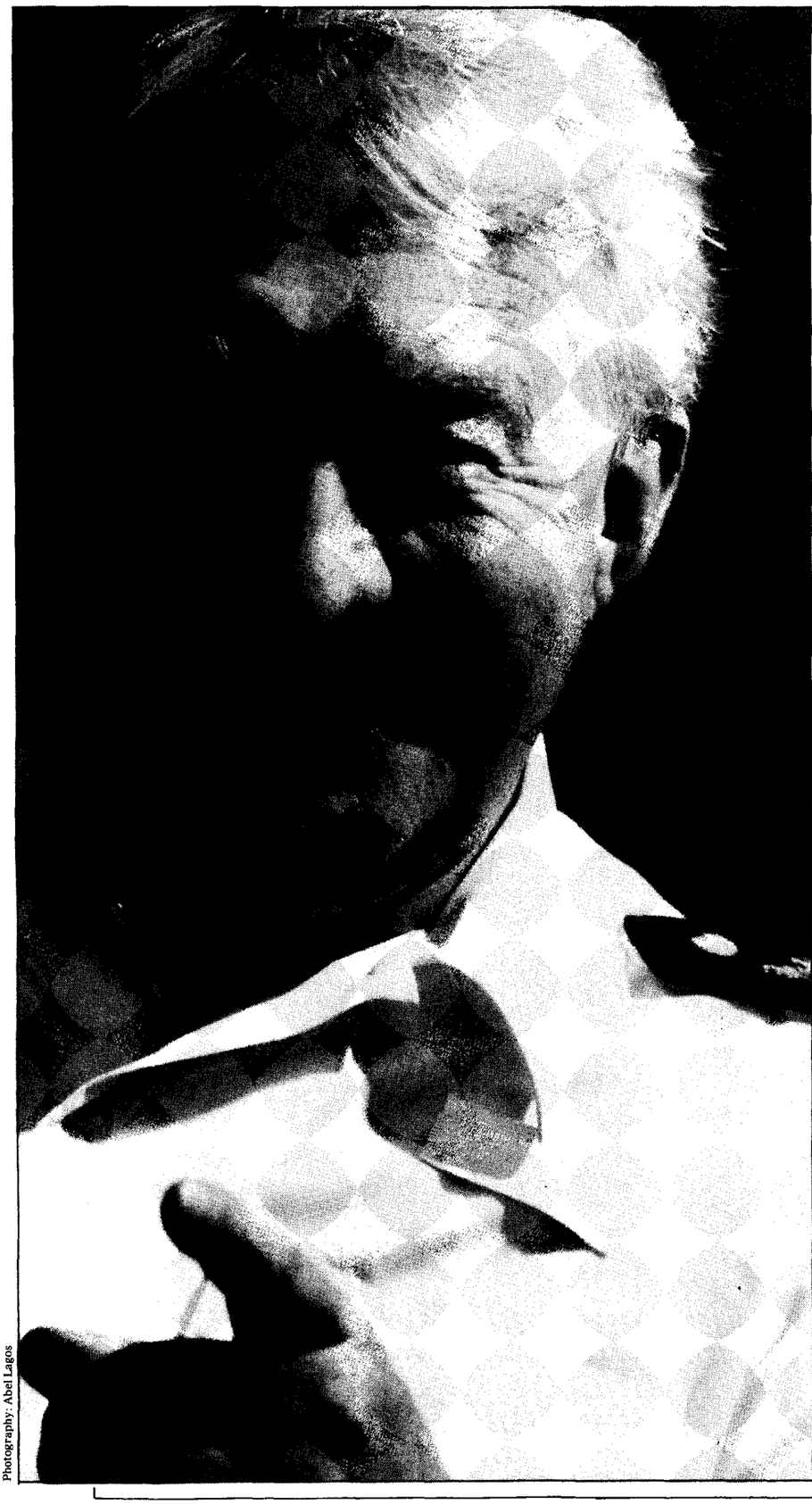
EYE TO EYE



Photography: Abel Lagos

bad news, isn't it? The ability to service black people, women and gays is doubtful.
Cultures of organisations cannot be changed overnight. But you are saying you have to be gay to be able to provide a service for people that are gay, or black to provide a service for people that are black. That is not true. You have to be sensitive. The importance of black officers is to give the black community confidence, and it reduces racism within the service.

Let us be concrete. Police culture does not support somebody coming out as gay. Given that the police depend on the co-operation of the community to provide evidence, if the gay community feels that police equals danger – and they have plenty of experience to confirm that – then you have a crisis of detection. Your gay staff are not available to you as a resource. Murder is one of the cases of relative success in detection, so gay murders remaining unsolved are a serious problem.
But we do solve gay murders. It is done by patience and almost invariably individual officers.

What I am trying to get at here is the consequences of having a very homogeneous police population. What are the consequences of having a masculinised police force? I am thinking about the strictly professional issue of detection.
Women have to police in a different way. It tends to be, generally, a softer kind of policing, but not always, so they manage conflict situations rather than confront them.

What's the proportion of black officers here?
The county council and the police authority don't allow me to keep public figures on black officers or minorities. Isn't that strange and isn't it inhibiting? So I can't say whether my equal opportunities policy is working or not.

Are you going to be able to change that?
I have already registered a protest with the chair of the police authority but it is a political decision. I do know that, in having just had a £2m cut in my budget as a result of community-charge capping, the officers in the pipeline for recruitment – and a significant proportion of those were potential recruits from the black community – are not going to be able to be taken on.

So the economic environment has enormous knock-on effects for you.
I will be 91 officers and 50 civilian staff worse off than I would have expected to be at the end of the financial year.●

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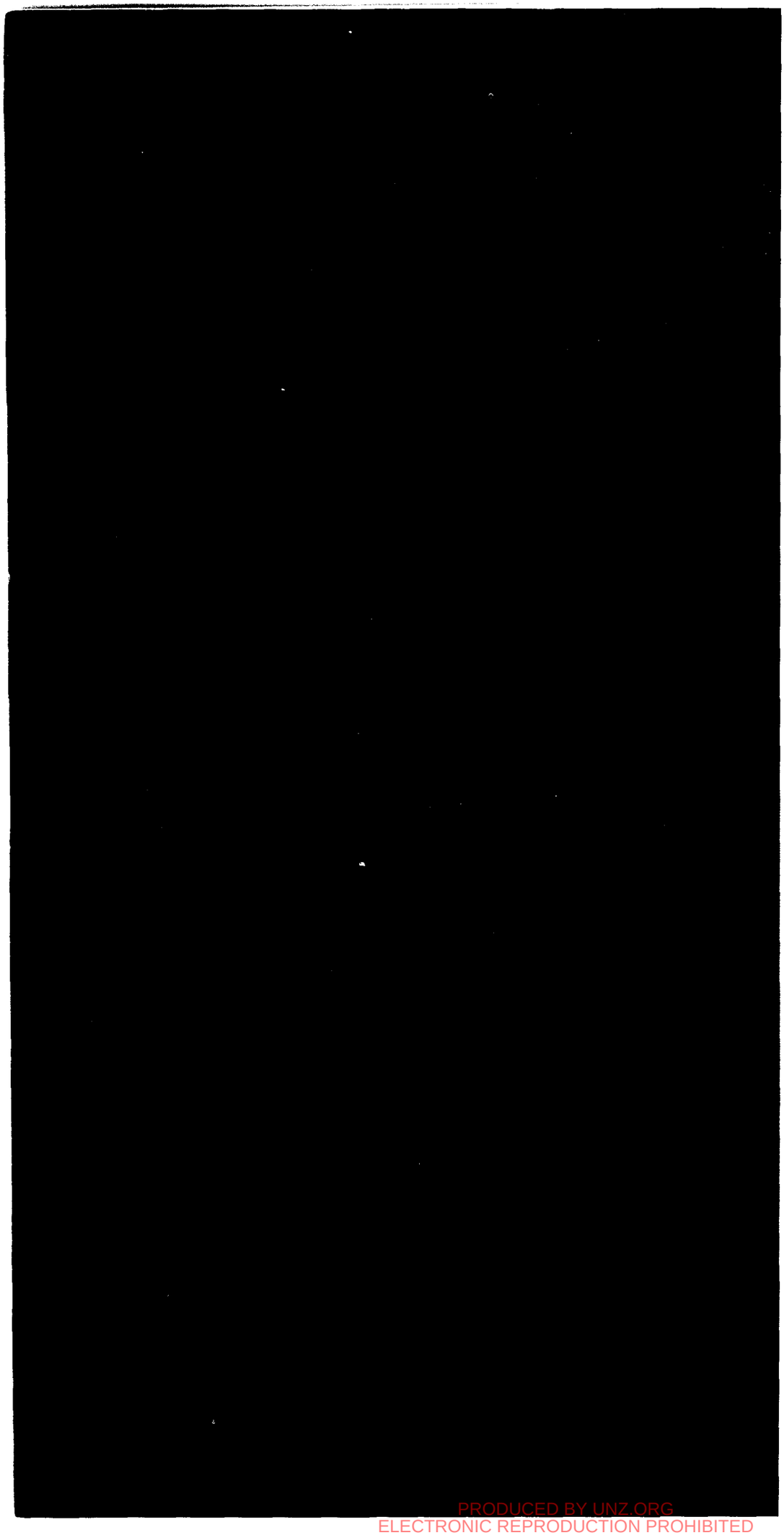

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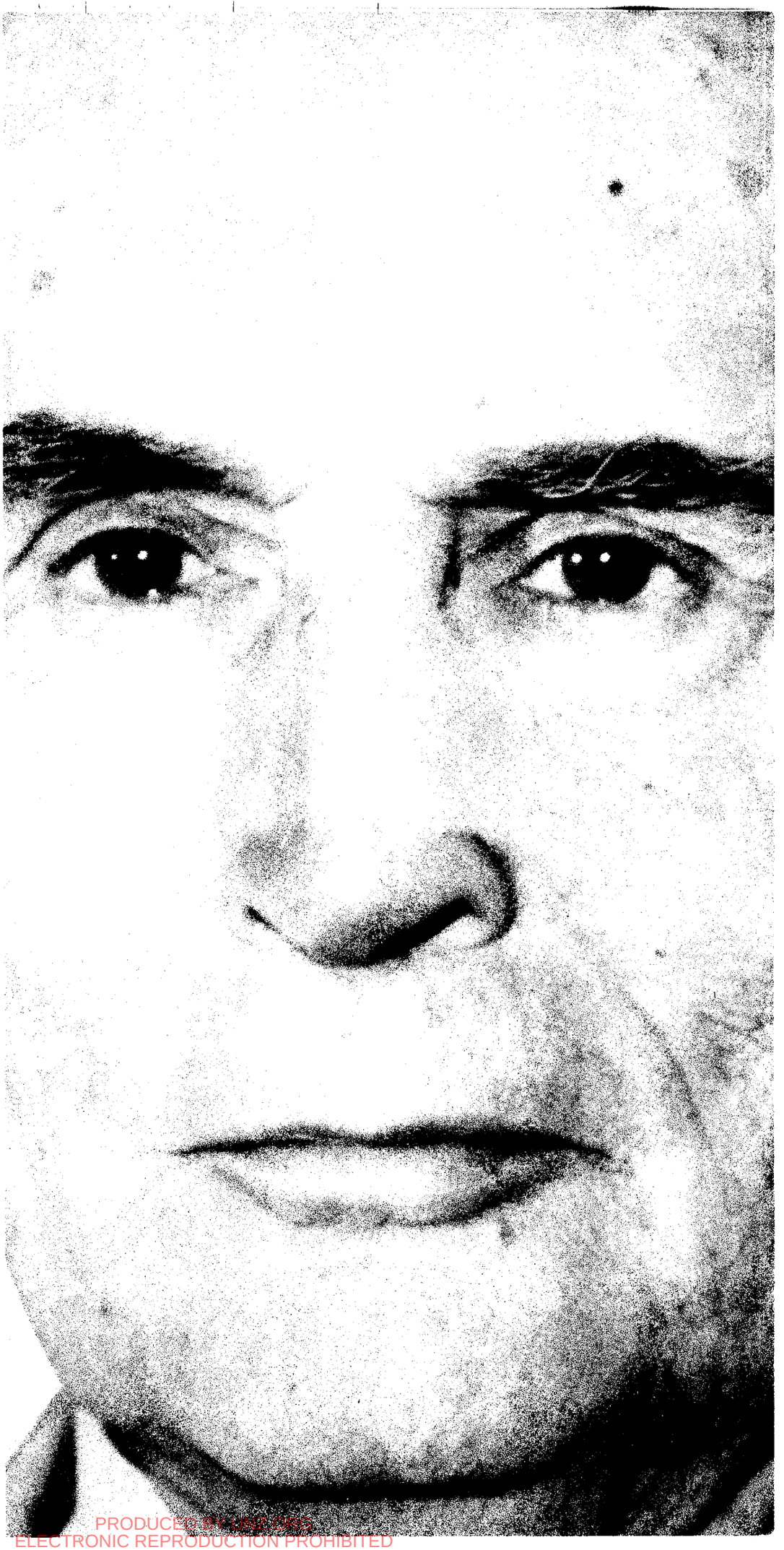

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PREVIEW

Simon Louvish gets to the heart of Israeli culture

State Of Mind

Building a new world: A scene from one of the earliest Palestinian sound films, *Land Of Promise*

Behind every attempt to define the art of Israel lies the old chestnut of defining Israel itself. What is an Israeli? The holder of an Israeli passport or identity card? The inheritor of Jewish culture? Occidental or oriental? A Middle Eastern hybrid? Where does a Palestinian Arab fit in?

The publicity for the Barbican Centre's exhibition, 'Israel: State Of The Art' (October 10 – November 29), tells us that this is the 'biggest single event devoted to the culture of Israel ever mounted in Britain'. It comes to us with the formal imprimatur of the Israeli government, under the patronage of Israel's president, Chaim Herzog, and Margaret Thatcher.

Portmanteau exhibitions like this by definition co-opt the work of individual artists and groups. The writer writes, the painter paints, the craftsman or woman crafts, the film-makers film, without regard to the attempts of cultural commissars to squeeze the melange into one pot. Lip-service may be paid to diversity, but the relationships between artists and the state is always one of tension, at best.

The exhibition's implied claims of comprehensiveness raise obvious questions of inclusion and ommission. Visitors to these exhibitions will not be made aware of the wealth of Hebrew language modern theatre, or prose writing, or poetry (there is one 'literary event'), or the contribution of the majority Sephardi (oriental) population, or the input of Palestinian Arab artists into the current Israeli scene. Given the flux of events, the political context in which this event will take place cannot be predicted. Will it take place against a background of war or peace? Can we learn something from the components of these exhibits about the Mid-East mess?

The most comprehensive and valuable part of the Barbican's show is no doubt the season of films. This consists of a wide and well-chosen spread of work stretching from early, super-zionist pioneer tracts to the angst-ridden art films of the present, with a few more commercial products which are well worth the trip. I attended a screening at the National Film Theatre some years ago of the seminal *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer* (Thorold Dickinson, 1955), at which two other Israeli's and I laughed uncontrollably at the stilted patriotic tear-jerking, while appalled brethren from Golders Green demanded our eviction, in the belief that we were Arabs who had come to scoff.

The abyss between diaspora Jewry's view of Israel and the Israelis' own thorny attitudes has always been wide. Many of the films shown here have had serious problems of distribution outside Israel, particularly in the United States, due to the lack of support by the local Jewish constituency of what is seen as 'defeatist' and 'unhelpful'. Uri Barbash's *Beyond The Walls*, a strong tale of Arabs and Jews in prison, Danny Wachsmann's *Hamsin*, a Jewish-Arab love story, Rafi Bukaee's *Avanti Popolo*, a black comedy of Egyptian soldiers trapped behind enemy lines in the 1967 war, have all met with incomprehension abroad, despite solid support at home. Indeed, the irony is even greater, for many films partly funded by Israeli government money (without which production is virtually impossible in Israel, beyond the commercial Golan stable), are shunned by Israel's supporters outside.

Here is a good chance to see mint new releases. There's Danny Wachsmann's *The*

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Appointed, the story of a mystic Rabbi in present day Israel, Gideon's Ganani's *Crossfire*, a doomed love story set in Tel Aviv-Jaffa of 1947, about to be torn apart by war, Uri Barbash's latest film, *One Of Us*, an adaptation of a play set in an army base in the context of the Palestinian intifada, and Yossi Somer's *Burning Memory*, a harrowing first feature on the scars of war. But of course there are other stories in Israel, and several titles, *The Summer Of Aviya*, *Peeping Toms*, *Hide And Seek* and the old classic *Sallah Shabbati* are well worth a visit.

Anyone wishing to understand the strange milieu of Israel's kibbutz movement and its zionist-socialist tensions will find in Itzhak (Tsepel) Yeshurun's film *Noa At Seventeen* a fascinating tale of a teenage girl growing up amid the theological disputes between zionist-stalinists and mainstream Labour-zionists in the early 1950s, an internecine political schism which led to many settlements physically splitting and forming rival kibbutzim on the other side of the road or hill, a scar still visble to this day.

It is this 'secret life' of Israel, beyond the cliches and propaganda (idealisation or demonisation) that can be glimpsed in many of these films, and which is absent in the rest of the programme. There are five concerts with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra with star performers which should go down well with music lovers. Good musicians play good music. There is the Yiddish Theatre, which I'm sure is wonderful, alhough the claim that 'The Yiddish language is currently undergoing an international revival' should be taken with several kilograms of salt. Much of the awakening interest of young Jews in that aspect of their culture is part of the drift away from Israel, anyway, rather than towards it.

There are paintings, craft and design. Playwright Yehoshua Sobol's new play, *Adam*, will be given a reading by the RSC. And to cap it all there is an exhibition of photographs by Robert Capa and Micha Bar Am. Two excellent professionals, without a doubt, but Capa of course was not an Israeli. One might as well co-opt all Jews, which I suppose is the name of the game.

Describing the 'personal style' of photographer Micha Bar Am, the brochure quotes one description of his work as 'wrapping the event into a comprehensive aesthetic package'. A phrase which might fit the ambience attempted here. The Barbican Centre has reproduced lists of '25 Things You Never Knew About Israel', from the Israel government tourist office, a pot-pourri of silly season snips: 'falafel are spicy balls of ground chick peas... ' 'native born Israelis are called Sabras because... '. And so on. I could think of another 25, or 50, more enlightening, and somewhat less cosy. But all this is part of the publicity machine.

It is a massive irony that while Israel's cultural life seethes with social and political controversy, Israel's state, paying lip service to that art, is dedicated to prevent any of this from affecting the situation on the ground. Israel's art is so often the fig leaf used to cover the nakednes of its realpolitik. But look beyond the hype, and you will find, among the films in particular, individual voices struggling with that endemic crisis of identity, as powerfully present today as it was 40 years ago, at Israel's 'birth'. Who are we, how can we come to terms with our neighbours, and where do we go from here?●

The long step forward: Chagall's *The Traveller* (1914)

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Q: What's The Big Idea?

A: There Isn't One
There Are Many

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Suzanne Moore meets a modern monster

Men Against Men Again

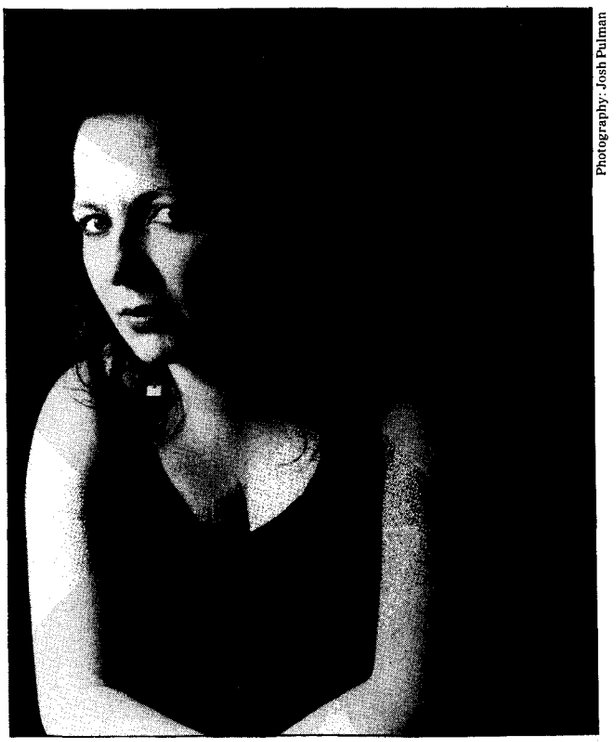
It's like a bad horror movie. Just when you thought they had finally left you alone, another one is coming at you. The Living Dead of sexual politics – the anti-sexist male – stalks the land. You might have thought he disappeared a few years back, well and truly overtaken by his more upmarket cousin, the New Man. But you were wrong, he is making a comeback. After all those predictions about the 90s being a more caring decade, what could be more appropriate than a man who cares more about sexism than any woman ever could?

After Paul Gascoigne, Jason Donovan and Cliff Richard have all recently reassured the nation that they are not 'poofs', maybe now is not the time to stick the boot into anti-sexist men. Don't we need some men around who at least give it a go? Whether they regard themselves as male feminists, anti-sexists, pro-feminist, gay-affirmative or just nicer than other men, surely they should be encouraged? Women should resume that delicate feminine position of gratitude and support, as men explain to us just how hard it is to be a man.

Perhaps this is not the fault of individual men. I mean, it's not polite to get too personal about the political, is it? But it *is* the fault of the whole muddle of anti-sexist ideology which is painfully short on theory, politics, or even ideas, and painfully long when it comes to a dire kind of moralism.

Yet that same lethal cocktail of guilt trip and ego trip that characterised and crippled so much of the 'men's movement' is due for a comeback. *Achilles Heel*, 'The Magazine For Changing Men', collapsed in the mid-80s due, they say, to 'a general uncertainty about the role, position and validity of anti-sexist men', but was relaunched this year.

Unwin Hyman are doing a new series, 'Men, Masculinities And Social Theory', which touches on the thorny issue of 'men's studies', explained as 'a separate discipline largely by and for men, paralleling women's studies. The fact that every other academic discipline is unofficially 'men's studies' anyway, seems to have escaped their notice.



Photography: Josh Pulman

The Campaign Against Pornography And Censorship have just held a one-day conference for men where no doubt a bunch of ex-wankers became born-again feminists, more offended by pornography than any woman could ever hope to be. They were addressed by John Stoltenberg 'America's leading male feminist' and the intellectual guru of self-flagellating men the world over. There was a time when the phrase 'male feminist' was considered to be a contradiction in terms. Not so for John, who, as he explains in his book *Refusing To Be A Man* (Fontana), realised that he was different from other men. Read this as 'better than other men', though how he mysteriously escaped the oppressive forces of gender construction is beyond me.

That this book comes with endorsements from Alice Walker, Shere Hite and Gloria Steinem is a sign, I think, of how little we have come to expect from men. Even the title is a problem – can you imagine a book called *Refusing To Be A White Person*? All the recent work on masculinity, whether good, bad or indifferent, has stressed the multiplicities of masculinities rather than emphasising the fixed nature of manhood as Stoltenberg does.

This realisation follows feminism's insistence that there are now a variety of feminisms. But Stoltenberg and his colleagues still respond to an imaginary feminism that is united in its demands. It is a frighteningly prescriptive belief-system with religious undertones. Andrea Dworkin is its high priestess and the language is one of conversion. Stoltenberg has seen through 'the sex-class system' even though, as he admits: 'I was born with a penis'. He is now spreading the word.

The word is pro-censorship with a strong line in policing correct sexual behaviour: 'Beware of relying on drugs or alcohol to give you "permission" to have sex, or to trick your body into feeling something that it's not.' This has nothing to do with sexual politics (not my kind anyway) and everything to do with sexual moralism. It has, as the *Achilles Heel* collective acknowledge, also a lot to do with age and class.

Some men may perceive themselves as a vanguard out there fighting for feminism, but if other men perceive them as a bunch of puritanical whingers it's hardly going to have a lot of effect. This stance is partly tied to the history of the men's movement itself, which moved so quickly from the political that it became entrenched in the personal world of therapy, growth and self-expression.

Now all of this is fine. I personally don't care whether men need to go to a men's group to get their consciousness raised or whether they go down the pub to get it lowered. I just don't want to hear about it. But just as early feminist writing was often miserable and confessional, the prospect of a whole spate of autobiographies with men who have grappled with their own masculinity is not something I relish. You know the kind of thing: laughed at in the shower, bad at sports, discovered *Playboy*, series of failed relationships, met feminist, saw the light, became father, life in crisis again... .

Nor, at a time when women's studies or gender studies are having to fight their ground, do I want a bunch of middle-class men demanding their own men's studies or 'the critique of men' as they call it. If women's studies is not the critique of men, then I don't know what is. What I do want is very simple. Very 70s even. It still seems impossible for men, sexist or anti-sexist, to comprehend. And that is to give women more space, whether it's pages in a magazine such as this, getting more women into management, or just by looking after the kids.

But this is far too mundane for the tortured world of the male feminist who is too busy searching for his 'emergent moral identity' and it may actually require him to become a little bit less self-obsessed, the poor man. It just goes to show that women are never satisfied. God knows, the next thing they'll be saying is that feminism belongs to them.●

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FORUM

Moving On

From Bill Morris, deputy general secretary, Transport and General Workers Union

Many commentators are prescribing a role for trade unions in the 1990s.

We are told we must fight each other in 'beauty contests' to win single union, no-strike deals. We are told we must not oppose attacks on national bargaining structures so that employers can play off one region of workers against another. We are told we cannot hope to recruit in low-density sectors so the only form of growth can be through merger.

To allow these negative views to dictate our role in life after Thatcher would be to accept that her anti-collective ideology has worked. My union rejects these notions as short-sighted and self-defeating.

David Metcalf (*MT* September) seems to imply an even worse scenario: unions themselves can do nothing; it is the forces around them that will dictate their future. This passive role of player in someone else's game we also reject. I see a bright future for the trade-union movement, depending largely on the path unions themselves take.

Our own history, right up to this day, is a history of men. Middle-aged (white) men have dominated the trade-union movement, and it is their faces that have always been in the news as our representatives. But the growth in the numbers of women entering the labour market, particularly in the service sector, is radically altering the face of labour in Britain, and we must respond to this change by reflecting it within our own ranks.

My own union is changing its structures to appoint women full-time officials and also encourage women to get involved as lay activists. Much of our publicity and recruitment material is aimed at women and their distinct needs.

Our private surveys have shown that, far from not wanting unions, the bulk of service-sector workers have never actually been asked to join one. Where they have been invited to join, women workers would rather be approached by a woman than by a man – so we are developing women recruitment teams. This rule also applies to the growing number of ethnic minority workers in Britain, although clearly the movement has even further to go in this regard.

One hundred and fifty years of history must be treated with the care and respect it deserves. It is our duty to nurture a progressive agenda, one that looks at the issues relevant to the new workforce while not neglecting the needs of large sections of the working population that have depended on trade-union protection for many years.

I do not pretend there is an overnight solution. Indeed some unions will continue to take a narrow, short-term approach in pursuit of quick, short-term gains. But with a base of 1.25m members, the Transport and General Workers Union is a key part of progressive change, not of passive submission.●

Union News

From Jim Bewsher, a former official of Nupe

David Metcalf (*MT* September) asks all the right questions about the future of unions. Unfortunately, he reaches the wrong conclusions.

His central premise, that 'the future of the labour movement is largely in the hands of employers' and that 'concern by unions for their own structure and organisations is very much of secondary importance', is seriously flawed.

He argues that neither changes in the structure of the workforce nor the legislative onslaught explain the decline in membership. On the contrary, the changes in the workforce have been devastating. But mainly because unions have found it difficult to adapt to its different needs. These days, if a club doesn't offer what you want, why bother to join it?

To suggest that the legislation on the closed shop, recognition and immunities has not had a serious effect on union influence flies in the face of experience. It also denies the changes in political climate in the 80s and ignores the fact that employers and unions have conflicting agendas.

A better question would be to ask why these changes have been possible. Only if unions have not been deeply rooted in democratic society could they be so easily put aside. If they were perceived as meeting the needs of all their potential members, then changes in the law would have been much more difficult.

This is clearly shown in the issue of recognition. David Metcalf suggests there are two possibilities. Brute force as practised by TGWU lorry drivers in the 60s, or 'beauty contests' leading to 'sweetheart' deals in the 90s. But this is too simple. Recognition is not just a matter between unions and employers, it is a reflection of the balance of power and ideas at a particular time. It would, for example, have been quite unthinkable for GCHQ to have been derecognised in the 70s. Conversely, the Dock Labour Scheme was abolished with no serious opposition because the balance of power has changed. It was also an industrial practice that few were willing to support into the 90s.

Statutory rights to recognition are essential. But the democratic argument has to be made and won. To do so will require consistency. It's no good insisting that employers respect a members' ballot if similar democracy is not applied in important matters of union policy.

Unions must continue to recruit non-members, 'though this should have much lower priority than forging links with employers', argues David Metcalf. He is wrong. Unions need membership; but they need to ask why people won't join. The solution doesn't lie in credit cards or cut-price insurance.

Rather, the changes need to relate to a union's main task – representing people at their place of work on matters to do with their work. To be attractive to a changed workforce full of part-timers, women returnees and contract workers, unions must change their ways of working and how they are perceived. In particular, they will have to send out clear messages as to whose interests they have at heart.

These arguments are not new but still need to be made. However, change in priorities is perfectly possible. Some unions are running campaigns on sexual harassment or equal pension rights for part-timers. Today, after much effort, Nupe has a majority of women on its executive.

The future of unions is in their own hands, not 'in the hands of the employers'.●

Undesirable

After years struggling for sexual and domestic relations to be recognised as important political issues, feminist and gay activists can only be uneasy reading the series of articles entitled 'Desire' (*MT* August).

With the exception of Richard Dyer, who asks us to question heterosexuality as the pre-given norm, the writers, particularly Maureen Freely and Andrea Stuart, unimaginatively replicate neo-conservative assumptions. Namely that our beds and homes are conceptually private, with no political or cultural significance. Thus, brutish sex can be enjoyed – played out between the sheets – in a world where gender relations are defined as being both consensual and equal.

The trivialisation endemic to these articles accentuates, in contrast, the reality. Our sexuality is policed, as Maureen Freely suggests, but not by Sheila Jeffreys. Women in Britain today are abused and exploited by male partners who believe it is their right; lesbians and gay men are oppressed by state and civil society in order to preserve the patriarchal ideal. Does it need saying that sexual and domestic relations are acutely political – intimately connected to the allocation of power, resources and work and essentially involved in the reproduction of social reactions and cultural values?

Yet this is not our biological destiny: an oppositional sexual politics is possible. A politics that begins by critically deconstructing sexual relations, realising that who and what we desire both shapes and is shaped by other social practices.

As a magazine that aims to be at the critical 'cutting edge', I am amazed you included no articles from a lesbian-feminist perspective. Lesbian feminists have been in the forefront of examining social and gender relations, and in attempting to re-create an oppositional erotica with progressive values.

Maureen Freely is right to question how easily this can happen; but she is wrong to sneer at attempts to do so. After 11 years of Thatcherism it is not surprising that privileged women (and men) have succumbed to enjoying the status quo. What is wrong, however, is for people to legitimise their own departure from struggle by undermining those still trying and hopeful for change.●

Davina Cooper, London

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Green Ideology

Although I agree with Shelagh Young that it is a critical failing of 'green experts' to place ideology low on their agendas ('Forum', *MT* August), she has clearly misunderstood Tim O'Riordan's article. For me, what was refreshing was that ideology was up front, permeating O'Riordan's prose. Young missed this because O'Riordan was referring to a global ideology, not another form of the stagnating nation-state ideology we have grown used to.

Global warming will affect the lives of everyone; there will be no overall winner. Nuclear war is the nearest analogy, but the difference is that global warming is actually happening, and the longer effective action is put off the worse this 'World War III' will be. In the face of such a real global crisis, a uniform global response is essential; a global ideology above the nation-state is needed – so why not embody this in an idea of global citizenry?

O'Riordan does not suggest that Third World suffering would be motivation enough for effective anti-global warming action by the West. But what is becoming apparent is that, contrary to the present 'them and us' attitude, the West badly needs the developing nations. It needs them to comply with future greenhouse-gas emission reduction protocols, to conserve the genetic diversity of the wild so as to better adapt to agricultural changes, and its own economy is closely bound to the fortunes of these nations.

In turn, the South must see that the North is serious about a commitment to put its own house in order and redistribute global wealth in a more equitable way, as O'Riordan admirably discusses. Truly, we are living in the era of an interdependency culture.

If you look hard enough, there are positive signs, from the hundreds of thousands of effective citizens' groups worldwide and the acceptance and participation of non-government organisations at intergovernmental conferences, to nation-states ceding elements of their sovereignty, both in the European Community and to international institutions.

How the essential changes are accomplished is the biggest gamble, but clear, concise information together with debate on ideology and responsibility are powerful, essential tools and Tim O'Riordan is to be praised, while Shelagh Young should be asked to keep her pessimistic prejudices to herself, unless she can develop an alternative.

Something along the lines of global citizenry is going to be inevitable, otherwise we are all going to be sunk.●

Philip Parker, Brighton, Editor, the Greenpeace magazine

Cruise Control

My friends and I spend many hours cruising because it is an activity which can take place anywhere. Consequently I enjoyed cruising Gilbert Adair's article (*MT* August). As often, the result was disappointing (in both contexts) because two vital considerations seemed to be omitted. (This was apart from the lengthy references to *Death In Venice*, with its overtones of paedophilia.)

The first is the element of voyeurism involved. It gives the cruising man (do women cruise?) control of the situation through its use as a trigger for fantasy and desire. It is also relatively safe, because most of the objects of cruising are heterosexual men and consequently are not aware that they are being cruised. Men look at women, they are not accustomed to looking at each other, unless they are gay.

Gay men have the satisfaction of inhabiting a secret world in which they are in control. It also gives an element of danger, because when heterosexual men become aware they are the object for the look of another man, they are liable to react violently. We still need to do much unpacking of this aspect of male behaviour.

This brings me to the second omission, namely that we are referring to a peculiarly masculine mode of behaviour. Herein, surely, lies the ultimate failure of most cruising to reach the desired conclusion of sexual contact. If it did so, the participants must not only confront their own sexuality but also make themselves available to another man. For most men the former is still heavily suppressed. The latter has profound implications for remaining in control, unemotional, dominant and all the other supposedly desirable behaviour that masculinity requires.

We still need to address these issues as men, both gay and straight, in order to enhance desire. Nostalgia for the 50s will not produce this, especially if it ignores the police pogroms, sexism and bitchiness of that miserable era.●

Pete Smith, Leicester

Ideal Worlds

Geoff Mulgan's thoughtful discussion of individual and collective responsibility (*MT* September) is marred by his fashionable contempt for what he calls 'utopian ideologies'.

He accuses utopias of making childish promises to 'maximise freedom' without demanding reciprocal obligations. This charge is unfounded. Utopias come in various shapes and sizes. But the wish-fulfilment fairyland in which people's desires are instantly satisfied is a minor sub-type of the genre.

Most utopian visions have severely downgraded individual freedom from material and social restraint in favour of some more imperious claim: for example, a caste-divided and Spartan version of social justice in Plato's *Republic*, or the virtues of temperance, fortitude and prudence in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*.

Utopian thought operates on the ill-defined boundary between social theory and imaginative fiction. It is necessarily speculative, but not unbridled. Systematic speculation about alternative social worlds (both better and worse) has recurred throughout human civilisation. It has certainly formed part of the broad socialist tradition from Charles Fourier to Marge Piercy. We neglect utopias at the risk of intellectual sclerosis and moral impoverishment.

Of course, utopia is not an attainable state. But it is a good discipline to visit imaginary societies from time to time. It's also great fun.●

David Purdy, Manchester

Cartoon: Nick Newman

Pseuds' Corner

As a left-wing academic and trained sociology teacher I have followed the writing of both Fredric Jameson and Stuart Hall over the years with much interest, if not always agreement. But what can we make of their discussion 'Clinging To The Wreckage' (*MT* September)? Is it, perhaps, their bid for fame in Private Eye's 'Pseuds' Corner'? It is certainly difficult to make much sense of what is being said. The only conclusion I can come to is that it doesn't matter how well known the person is; if their political understanding is in crisis they are as likely to come up with complete gibberish as a *Sun* leader writer.●

Martin F Burke, London

Egged On

I don't especially object to Prince Charles's mug-shot adorning the cover of September's *Marxism Today*. But please let us know why he has a red button-hole, when earlier this year you gave Karl Marx, the namesake of the magazine, an egg on his face?●

Brian Nicholls, London

Editorial Note:

We welcome your letters to add to discussion. Please send them to *MT* Letters, 6-9 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF. (Note change of address.) Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut.●

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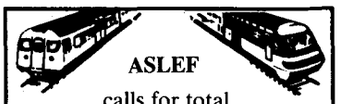

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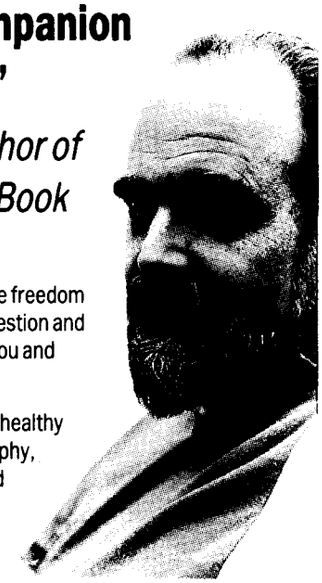

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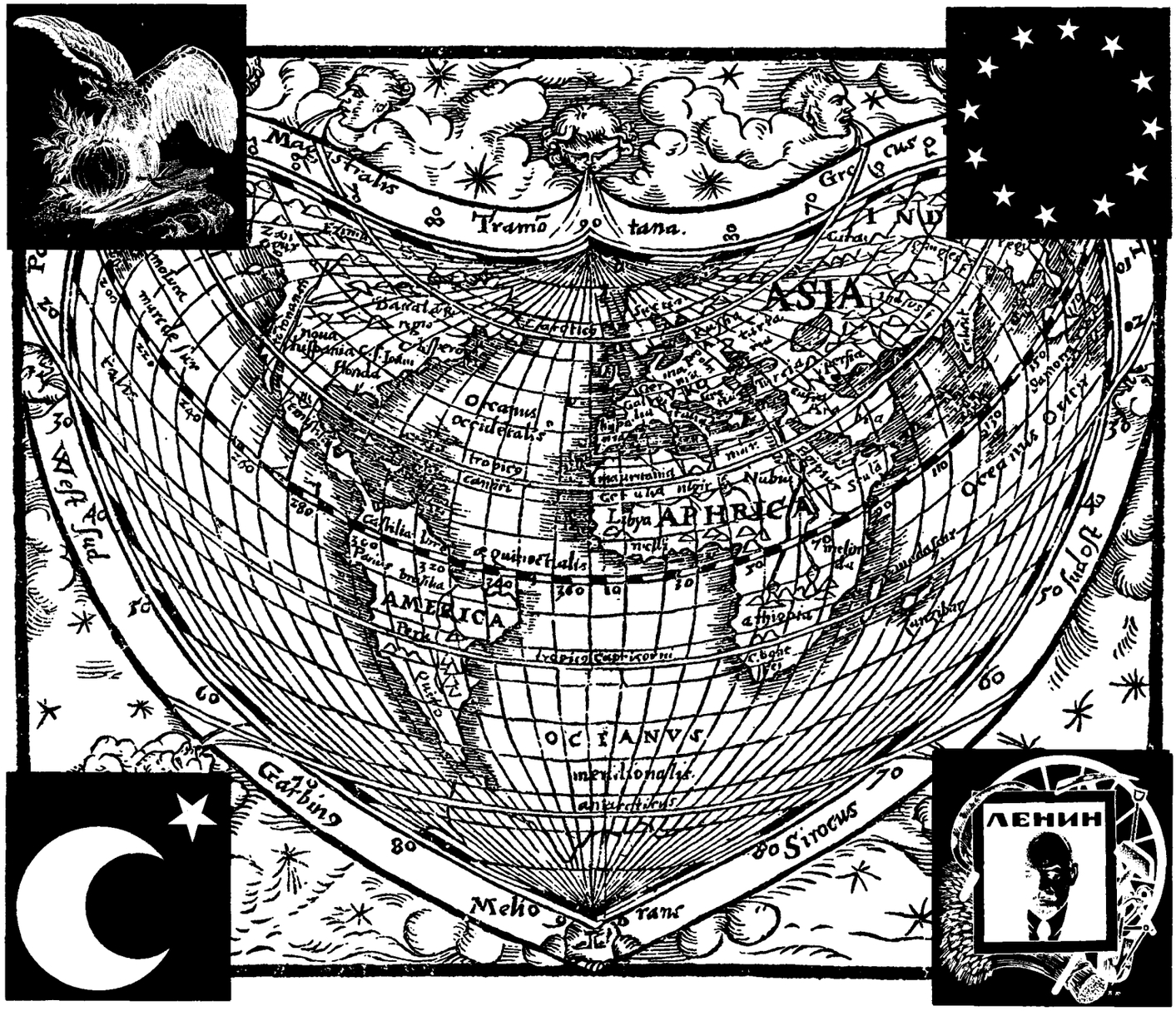

New World Order

The old world has dissolved before our very eyes. The Soviet Union has withdrawn, divided and defeated. A systemic alternative to capitalism is no longer on offer. We are witnessing the end not simply of 1945 but also 1917. But if the old world has collapsed, what will replace it? We can only guess. It is as if there has been an enormous earthquake and the plates are still in unpredictable motion.

Such momentous events require an enormous rethink. Old ways of thinking have been made redundant, previous categories rendered obsolete. What does socialism mean now? How do we make sense of an international crisis in which the two old superpowers are on the same side? This issue is devoted to an analysis of the collapse of the old order and the creation of the new. It starts with an assessment of the significance of 1989 by Eric Hobsbawm. It was a year which already ranks alongside 1917 and 1789 in its historic importance. The collapse of eastern Europe signalled the end of the era of 1917.

This is followed by William Wallace and Martin Walker who discuss what the new world order might look like. Already, within a few months of the end of the cold war, the Gulf crisis has underlined that we live in uncertain times. It is almost inconceivable that such a crisis could have happened in the old bipolar world. It is a reminder, moreover, that the United States remains a formidable power.

Fred Halliday and Joe Stork discuss the politics of the Gulf crisis, and what attitude the Left should adopt towards Saddam Hussein and the possibility of military action by the United States. While Roger Owen outlines the potential scenarios for the Middle East.

Finally, as the party conference season gets under way, Andrew Gamble and John Lloyd examine the attitudes of the Conservative and Labour Parties to Europe, an issue which has increasingly come to dominate the domestic political agenda and which holds the key to the shape of British politics over the coming decade. ●

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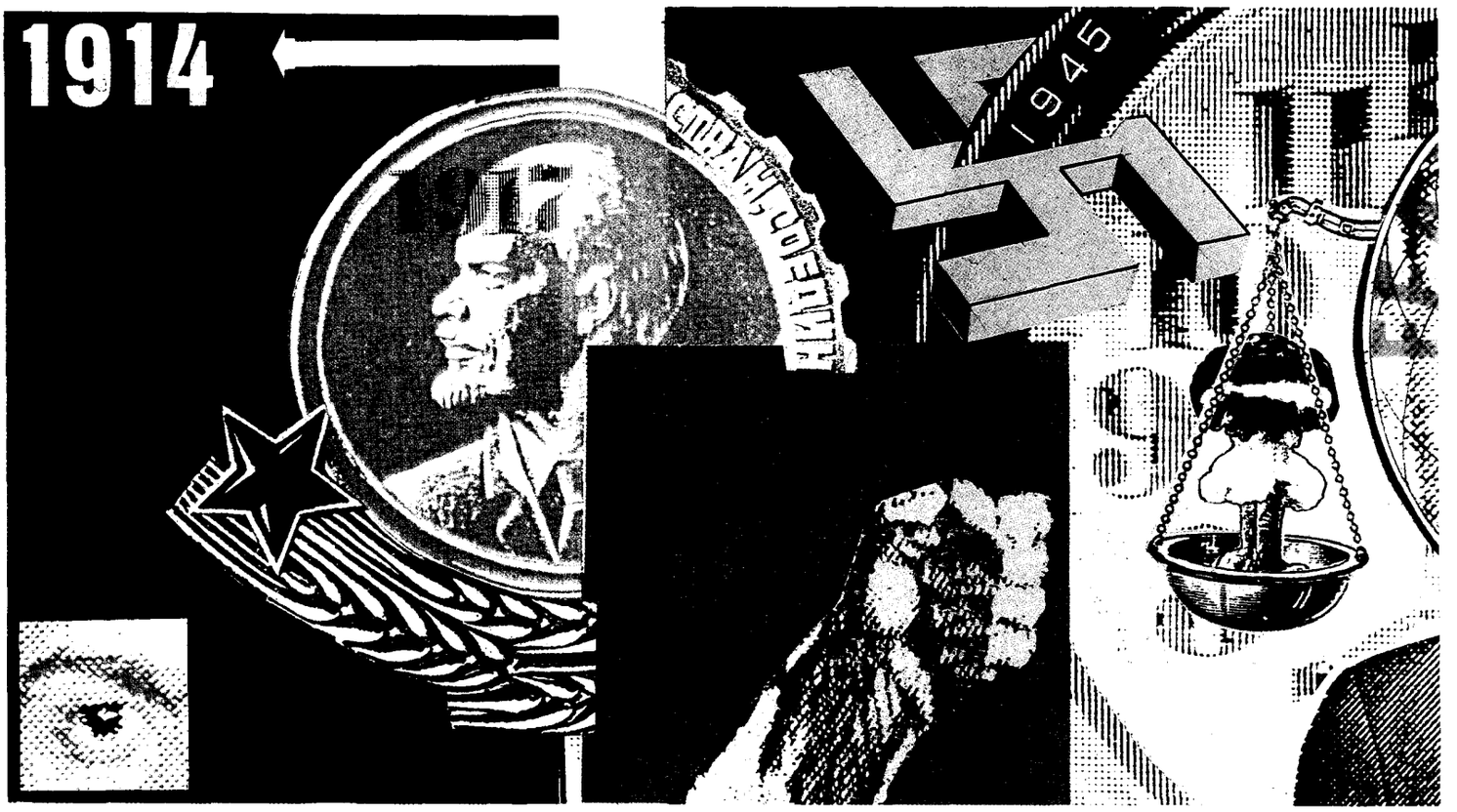

Goodbye To All That

The events of 1989 marked the end of an era, of the epoch ushered in by 1917. **Eric Hobsbawm** looks at the meaning of 1989

What is the historical significance of 1989, the year in which communism collapsed in eastern Europe, suddenly and presumably irrevocably, anticipatinng the collapse of the existing regime in the USSR and the break-up of its multinational structure? Instant diagnosis is a dangerous game, almost as dangerous as instant prophecy. The only people who dive into it without hesitation are those who expect their diagnoses and prophecies to be instantly forgotten (like journalists and commentators) or not to be remembered after the next election or two (like politicians). Still, there are times when events concentrated into a short space of time, whatever we make of them, are plainly historic and immediately seen to be such. The year of the French Revolution and 1917 were such times and 1989 was equally clearly another. So what do we make of it?

It is much easier to see 1989 as a conclusion than as a beginning. It was the end of the era in which world history was about the October Revolution. For over 70 years all Western governments and ruling classes were haunted by the spectre of social revolution and communism, eventually transmuted into fear of the military power of the USSR and its potential international repercussions. Western governments are still coming to terms with the collapse of an international policy entirely designed to meet a Soviet threat, both political and military. Without the belief in such a threat Nato has no sense at all. That there was never any reality in this Western image of a Soviet Union poised

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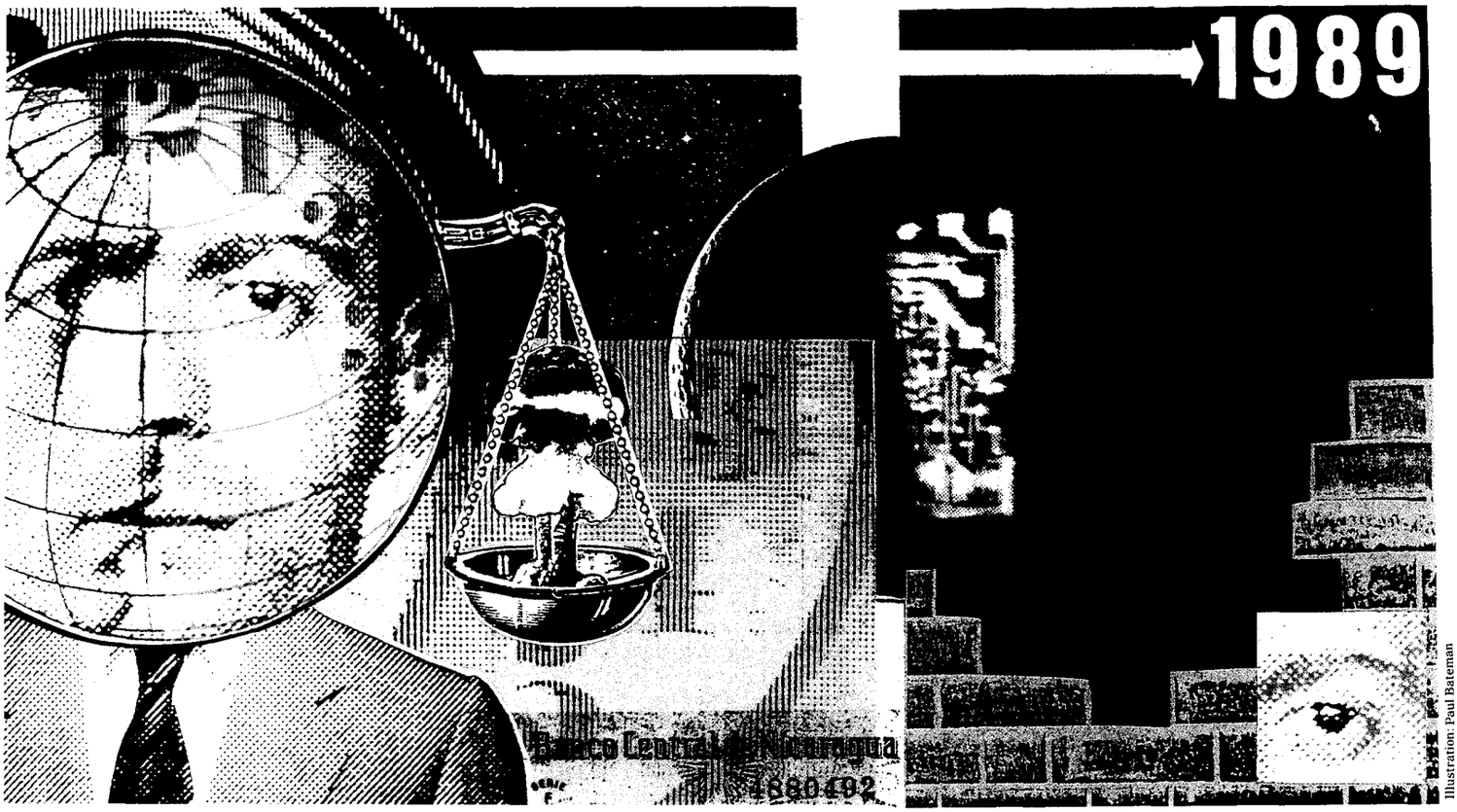

Illustration: Paul Bateman

to overrun or nuke the 'free world' at a moment's notice only proves how deep the fear of communism was. For over 70 years international politics has been waged by one side as a crusade, a cold war of religion, with a brief intermission for confronting the more real dangers of the Berlin-Tokyo axis.

On the other side it had long been clear that it was no such thing. It is true that Lenin and the Bolsheviks saw October as the first phase of the world revolution which would overthrow all capitalism. The early generations of communists (including the present writer) still joined what we thought of as a disciplined army to fight and win the world revolution. Nikita Khrushchev, the only peasant ever to rule Russia (or for that matter any important state), still sincerely believed that communism would bury capitalism, though not by revolution. And the dramatic extension of both anti-imperialist and communist revolution after world war two seemed at first sight to confirm the prospect.

Nevertheless, it is clear that from the early 1920s onwards the USSR's policy was no longer designed to achieve world revolution, although Moscow would certainly have welcomed it. In the era of Stalin, who actively discouraged bids for power by any communist party and distrusted communist parties who made revolution against his advice, Soviet policy was cautious and essentially defensive, even after the stunning victories won by the Red Army in world war two. Khrushchev, unlike Stalin, took risks and lost his job for it. Whatever Brezhnev wanted to do, spreading communism all over the world, let alone

'Those of us who believed that the October Revolution was the gate to the future of world history have been shown to be wrong'

invading the West, were neither within his power nor on his agenda.

After 1956, when the international communist movement visibly began to disintegrate, various groups outside the Moscow orbit claimed the original marxist-leninist or at least the world-revolutionary inheritance. On a world scale, neither the 57 varieties of trotskyists, maoists, revolutionary marxists, neo-anarchists and others, nor the states nominally committed to their support, amounted to anything. Even within particular countries their impact, except for brief moments, was usually marginal. The most systematic attempt to spread revolution along these lines, the Cuban revolutionary export drive of the 1960s, did not even begin to look like getting anywhere. Unlike the first world revolutionary wave of 1917-19 and the second wave which followed world war two, the third wave, coinciding with the world crisis of the 1970s, even lacked a unified ideological tradition or pole of attraction. The most important social upheaval of this period by far, the Iranian revolution, looked to Muhammad and not to Marx. The communists, though central to the ending of the last hold-overs of the European fascist era, were soon side-lined in post-Salazar Portugal and post-Franco Spain by what claimed to be social democrats.

But if there was no significant movement to overthrow capitalism worldwide, revolutionaries still hoped that its contradictions and those of its international system made it vulnerable – perhaps one day fatally vulnerable – and that marxists, or at any rate socialists, would provide the alternative to it. If communist power did not look like expanding much except in small Latin American countries and, nominally, African states of little international significance, the world was still divided into the 'two camps', and any country or movement which broke with capitalism and imperialism tended to gravitate or to be notionally absorbed into the socialist sphere. Ex-colonies which did not claim in some sense to be 'socialist' or which did not look in some way to the Eastern model of economic development were rare birds indeed in the generation or two after 1945. In short, world politics could still be seen, even on the left, as the working out of the consequences of the October Revolution.

All this is now over. Communism in eastern Europe has dissolved or is dissolving. So is the USSR as we have known it. Whatever China will be like when the last of the Last March generation is dead, it will have little to do with Lenin and less with Marx. Outside the former regions of 'real socialism' there are probably not more than three communist parties with genuine mass support (Italy, South Africa and the regionally concentrated CP-Marxist of India), and one of them wants to rejoin international social democracy as fast as it can. We are seeing not the crisis of a type of movement, regime and economy, but its end. Those of us who believed that the October Revolution was the gate to the future of world history have been shown to be wrong. What was wrong about Lincoln Steffens' 'I have seen the future and it works', was not that it failed to work. It worked in a rackety way, and it has great and in some cases astonishing

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achievements to its credit. But it turned out not to be the future. And when its time came, at least in eastern Europe, everyone including its rulers knew this, and it collapsed like a house of cards.

How did it happen that the fear, or the hope, or the mere fact of October 1917 dominated world history for so long, and so profoundly, that not even the coldest of cold-war ideologists expected the sudden, virtually unresisted disintegration of 1989? It is impossible to understand this, ie, the entire history of our century, unless we remember that the old world of global capitalism and bourgeois society in its liberal version collapsed in 1914, and for the next 40 years capitalism stumbled from one catastrophe to the next. Even intelligent conservatives would not take bets on its survival.

A simple list of the earthquakes that shook the world during this period is enough to make the point: two world wars, followed by two bouts of global revolution, leading to the wholesale collapse of old political regimes and the installation of communist power, first over one-sixth of the world's surface and later over one-third of the world's population; plus the dissolution of the vast colonial empires built up before and during the imperialist era. A world economic crisis brought even the strongest capitalist economies to their knees, while the USSR seemed to be immune to it. The institutions of liberal democracy virtually disappeared from all but a fringe of Europe between 1922 and 1942 as fascism and its satellite authoritarian movements and regimes rose. But for the sacrifices of the USSR and its peoples, Western liberal capitalism would probably have succumbed to this threat and the contemporary Western world (outside an isolated USA) would now consist of a set of variations on authoritarian and fascist regimes rather than a set of variations on liberal ones. Without the Red Army the chances of defeating the Axis powers were invisible. Perhaps history, in its irony, will decide that the most lasting achievement of the October Revolution was to make the 'developed world' once again safe for 'bourgeois democracy'. But that is of course to assume that it will remain safe... .

'For the time being there is no part of the world that credibly represents an alternative system to capitalism'

For 40 years capitalism lived through an era of catastrophe, vulnerability and constant instability, with a future that seemed entirely uncertain. Moreover, during this era it faced, for the first time, a system claiming to provide an alternative future: socialism. In the most traumatic years of this era, the early 1930s, when the very mechanism of the capitalist economy, as hitherto known, apparently ceased to function and Hitler's triumph in Germany dealt a body-blow to liberal institutions, the USSR appeared to make its most dramatic advances. In retrospect it seems amazing that liberal and conservative politicians (not to mention those of the Left) went to Moscow to learn lessons ('plan' became a buzz-word across the Western political spectrum), or that even socialists could have sincerely believed that their economies would outproduce the Western system. In the days of the Great Slump it did not seem absurd at all.

On the contrary, what was entirely unexpected, not least by governments and businessmen anxious about post-war ruin and possible depressions, was the extraordinary surge of global economic growth after the second world war. This turned the third quarter of the present century into the all-time golden age of capitalist development: the 'Thirty Glorious Years' in the French phrase. So unexpected was it, that the existence of this super-boom was only slowly recognised, even by those who benefited from it – 'You never had it so good' did not become a British political slogan until 1959 – and was fully recognised only in retrospect, after the boom had come to an end in the early 1970s. Initially it did not look like a specifically capitalist triumph, since both 'camps' – at least in Europe and Asia – were busy recovering from the ravages of war, and the rate of growth of the socialist economies during this period was generally considered to be as fast, if not faster, than the rest.

However, from some time in the 1960s it became patent that capitalism had surmounted its era of catastrophe, although it was not yet so evident that the socialist economies were running into serious trouble. Nevertheless, in material and technological terms the socialist camp was clearly no longer in the race.

Somehow the heritage of the age of catas- trophe was surmounted, or at least buried. Fascism and its associated forms of authoritarianism were destroyed and liquidated in Europe, and variants of liberal democracy once again became the normal political regimes in the metropolitan countries. (In what now came to be called the Third World this was notably not the case.) The colonial empires of the imperialist era, notoriously the Achilles heel of their metropoles, were politically decolonised. Both processes, decisively initiated in 1945-48, were essentially completed in the 1970s.

War, which had twice swept through the developed world, and especially Europe, was eliminated from this region, partly by being transferred to the Third World. There the years from 1945 to 1990 have probably seen rather more bloodshed and destruction than any other period of comparable length in modern history. Peace in the developed world was probably not maintained simply by the fear of nuclear war, and by mutual deterrence, ie, in practice by the deterrent effect of the Soviet nuclear arms on the USA after the end of the short-lived and extremely dangerous period of US nuclear monopoly[1].

It was also due to three factors: a world politics simplified into a game for two players; the Yalta agreement which in practice demarcated each superpower's zone in Europe, from which neither tried to break out; and, eventually, the unquestionable prosperity and stability of the developed capitalist countries which eliminated the possibility, let alone the likelihood, of social revolution in this region. Outside Europe major wars (without nuclear weapons) were not, of course, eliminated.

Most important of all, capitalism learned the domestic lessons of its age of crisis, both in economics and in politics. It gave up the sort of free-market liberalism which Reaganite America and Thatcherite Britain, alone among developed Western countries, have tried to restore in the 1980s. (Both, not coincidentally, are capitalist economies on the slide.) The original stimulus for this change was almost certainly political. Keynes himself made no bones about the fact that his aim was to save liberal capitalism. After 1945 the enormous expansion of the socialist 'camp' and the potential threat it presented concentrated the minds of Western governments wonderfully, not least on the importance of social security. The intention of this deliberate break with free-market capitalism was not only to eliminate mass unemployment (which was then regarded as automatically likely to radicalise its victims) but also to stimulate demand. From the mid-1950s it became clear that both these aims were being achieved. Expansion and prosperity made welfare capitalism affordable. It reached its peak in the 1960s, or even in the 1970s, before a new world crisis provoked a fiscal backlash.

Economically, therefore, the turn to a Keynesian mixed economy paid off dramatically. Politically it rested on the deliberate partnership between capital and organised labour under the benevolent auspices of government, which is now known and usually slagged off as 'corporatism'. For the age of catastrophe had revealed three things.

First, that the organised labour movement was a major and indispensable presence in liberal societies. Indeed sometimes, as in central Europe after the 1918 defeat, it emerged briefly as the only state-sustaining force to survive the collapse of empires.

Second, it was not Bolshevik. (Comintern exclusivism actually forced most socialist sympathisers with the October Revolution back into the reformist camp, and kept communists in a minority in the countries of the old Second International until the period of anti-fascist resistance.)

Third, that the only alternative to buying working-class loyalty with (expensive) economic concessions was to put democracy at risk. For this reason, even the fanatical economic neo-liberalism of Thatcher's type has so far not actually been able to dismantle the welfare state, or to cut down its expense.

The political consequences of leaving

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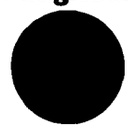
populations naked to fend for themselves in the blizzards of genuine neoliberal capitalism are too unpredictable to risk – except by graduates of business schools advising Third World and formerly socialist countries from local Hilton hotels. (Even the International Monetary Fund has discovered that there are limits to the sacrifices that can be imposed on remoter peoples.)

However, social Keynesianism, New Deal policies and 'corporatism' visibly bore the birthmarks of the era of capitalist troubles. The world capitalism that emerged from the 'Thirty Glorious Years' and (in the developed world) sailed through the economic gales of the 1970s and 1980s with surprisingly little difficulty, was no longer in trouble. It had entered a new technological phase. It had restructured the world into a substantially transnational economy with a new international division of production.

The two main pillars of the social-Keynesian era, economic management by nation-states and a mass industrial working class, especially one organised by traditional labour movements, did not so much crumble as slim down. Neither was any longer capable of carrying such heavy loads as before. Both Keynesian policies and the (mainly social-democratic) parties most firmly identified with them were clearly in difficulties, even though the essential foundation of any flourishing capitalism remained as before: a mixed public-private 'social market economy' (ie, profits plus a welfare state and social rights), an interweaving of private enterprise, public enterprise and a good deal of public control. To this extent the past 15 years have seen the fading away of another part of the heritage of the era from 1914 to the early 1950s.

'Europe has returned to a state of instability, as between the wars. And the new instability, as the Middle Eastern crisis proves, is not only European, but global'



However, a major symptom and product of that era remained: the third of the world under 'really existing socialism'. It did not 'fail' in any absolute sense, in spite of the growing sense that these economies required fundamental reforms, and the failure of the various attempts to reform them. Probably people in the USSR and in most of eastern Europe were better off in the 1970s than ever before. But three things were increasingly clear.

First, socialism was incapable of moving fully into, let alone generating, the new hi-tech economy, and was therefore destined to fall ever further behind. To have constructed the economy of Andrew Carnegie was no good unless one could also advance further into the economy of IBM – or even of Henry Ford, for socialism signally failed to achieve the mass production of consumer goods.

Second, in the society of global communications, media, travel and transnational economy, it was no longer possible to insulate socialist populations from information about the non-socialist world, ie, from knowing just how much worse off they were in material terms and in freedom of choice.

Third, with the slowing down of its rate of growth and its increasing relative backwardness, the USSR became economically too weak to sustain its role as a superpower, ie, its control over eastern Europe. In short, Soviet-type socialism became increasingly uncompetitive and paid the price. What is worse, it has so far proved incapable of adapting and reforming. In this it differs from Chinese socialism, whose economic reforms succeeded spectacularly – at least in the rural sector – but at the cost of seriously worsening social conditions; and which has so far fended off political unrest in the cities because the countryside is still predominant. Nor do these weaknesses apply to social-democratic mixed economies.

The Scandinavian countries and Austria have remained in the vanguard of economic and technical development and prosperity while keeping unemployment down and maintaining their ambitious welfare system in good order.

Who has won? Who has lost? And what are the prospects? The winner is not capitalism as such, but the old 'developed world' of the OECD countries[2], which form a diminishing minority of the world's population – say 15% today as against 33% in 1900. (The so-called Newly Industrialising Countries, or NICs, in spite of striking advances, still average only between a quarter and a third of the OECD's average per capita GDP.) The bulk of the world's population, whose governments have pursued economic development since 1917 if not before, without communist regimes, hardly encourage shouts of triumph from the Adam Smith Institute.

Unlike the former 'socialist camp', the non-socialist world contains regions that have actually reverted to local subsistence economy and famine. Moreover, within 'developed' capitalism it is certainly not the Thatcherite free-market utopia that has won. Even its intellectual appeal has been limited to ultras in the West and to despairing intellectuals in the East who hope that the South Pole is warmer that the North Pole because it is its polar opposite.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that capitalism, as reformed and restructured during its crisis decades, has once again proved that it remains the most dynamic force in world development. It will certainly continue to develop, as Marx predicted that it would, by generating internal contradictions leading to periodic eras of crisis and restructuring. These may once again bring it close to breakdown, as happened earlier this century. However, the current such period of crisis and restructuring has brought disaster to parts of the Third World, and to the Second World, but not to the First.

Who or what has lost, apart from the regimes of 'really existing socialism', which plainly have no future? The main effect of 1989 is that capitalism and the rich have, for the time being, stopped being scared. All that made Western democracy worth living for its people – social security, the welfare state, a high and rising income for its wage-earners, and its natural consequence, diminution in social inequality and inequality of life-chances – was the result of fear. Fear of the poor, and the largest and best-organised block of citizens in industrialised states – the workers; fear of an alternative that really existed and could really spread, notably in the form of Soviet communism. Fear of the system's own instability.

This concentrated the minds of Western capitalists in the 1930s. Fear of the socialist camp, so dramatically extended after 1945 and represented by one of two superpowers, kept them concentrated after the war. Whatever Stalin did to the Russians, he was good for the common people of the West. It is no accident that the Keynes-Roosevelt way of saving capitalism concentrated on welfare and social security, on giving the poor more money to spend, and on that central tenet of postwar Western policies – and one specifically targeted at the workers – 'full employment'. As it happens this bias against extreme inequality served capitalist development well. The showpiece countries of postwar economic growth, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, have enjoyed unusually egalitarian income distributions until recently, partly assured by postwar land reforms by occupying powers determined to counteract revolution.

Today this fear, already reduced by the diminution of the industrial working class, the decline of its movements and the recovery of self-confidence by a flourishing capitalism, has disappeared. For the time being there is no part of the world that credibly represents an alternative system to capitalism, even though it should be clear that Western capitalism represents no solutions to the problems of most of the former Second World, which is likely to be largely assimilated to the condition of the Third World. Why should the rich, especially in countries such as ours, where they now glory in injustice and inequality, bother about anyone except themselves? What political penalties do they need to fear if they allow welfare to erode and the protection of those who need it to atrophy? This is the chief effect of the disappearance of even a very bad socialist region from the globe.

It is too early to discuss long-term prospects for the future. What a Hungarian historian has called 'the short 20th century' (1914-1990) has ended, but all we can say about the 21st is that it will have to face at least three problems, which are getting worse: the growing width of the gap between the rich world and the poor (and probably within the rich world, between its rich and its poor); the rise of racism and xenophobia; and the ecological crisis of the globe which will affect us all. The ways

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in which they can be dealt with are unclear, but privatisation and the free market are not among them.

Among the short-term problems, three stand out. First, Europe has returned to a state of instability, as between the wars. Hitler's triumph briefly produced a 'German order'. Yalta and superpower duopoly produced 45 years of European stability, which are now at an end. Since Russia and the USA have ceased to be able, jointly, to impose their order as before, the only alternative hegemonic force on our continent, as between the wars, is Germany. That is what everyone is afraid of, not because 'Germans are Germans' – there will certainly be no return to Hitler – but because German nationalism has dangerous unfinished business: the recovery of the large territories lost in 1945 to Poland and the USSR.

And the new instability, as the Middle Eastern crisis proves, is not only European, but global. No longer held back by the fear that a sudden move by one superpower or its associated states into the other's zone of influence would provoke a direct confrontation between East and West, adventurism is once again on the agenda. What kept the world order in being since 1945, including most of the 60 sovereign mini-states with populations of less than 2m (the Gulf is full of such political artifacts), was largely the fear of global war. But if the nuclear world holocaust is no longer an immediate danger, a world in which medium-sized gangsters no longer hesitate to take over small neighbouring territories is not safer from war than before. Nor is one in which a superpower rushes blithely into the Middle Eastern explosives store ready to fire, knowing that those whose missiles could reach New York will no longer do the same. Is it an accident that, within barely half a year of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, we find ourselves facing a major war crisis?

The second development reinforces this world instability. For central and eastern Europe are relapsing into something like the post-first world war zone of nationalist rivalries and conflicts. In fact *all* the burning problems of this kind date back to the inter-war years. They posed no major headaches before 1914[3]. What makes the situation more explosive is that today the last of the pre-1914 multinational empires is in disintegration. For it was the October Revolution which saved the tsar's domains from the fate of the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires and gave them another 70-odd years of life as the USSR.

The dangers of war in this situation are serious. Already the demagogues of Great Russian nationalism are talking lightly about a possible 'civil war in which our situation would be a nuclear one'[4]. One day soon we may look back with melancholy on the days when nuclear triggers were under the control of the two superpowers.

Lastly, there is the instability of the political systems into which ex-communist states have rushed: liberal democracy. So did the new states in 1918. Twenty years later only Czechoslovakia was still democratic. The prospects for liberal democracy in the region must be poor, or at least uncertain. And the alternative, given the unlikelihood of a return to socialism, will most likely be military or right-wing or both.

So, let us wish eastern Europe and the world luck as it ends an old era and is about to enter the 21st century. We shall need luck. And let us commiserate with Mr Francis Fukuyama, who claimed that 1989 meant 'the end of history', and that henceforth all would be plain liberal, free-market sailing. Few prophesies look like being more short-lived than that one.●

'One day soon we may look back with melancholy on the days when nuclear triggers were under the control of the two superpowers'

1 The most dangerous period since the war was undoubtedly 1946-1953, during which Attlee specially travelled to Washington to dissuade Truman from using nuclear bombs in Korea. Probably the only time when the USSR appears to have seriously believed that war might be imminent was 1947-50.
2 If we leave out Turkey, Greece, Spain and Portugal, which were included only on political grounds, the OECD consists of Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, the US and West Germany. Australia is partly associated.
3 Among the problems which did not exist or were of very minor political significance before 1914: Croats versus Serbs; Serbs versus Albanians; Slovaks versus Czechs; the Transylvanian imbroglio; the three Baltic nationalisms; Byelorussia; Moldavia; Azerbaijani nationalism; not to mention the former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line.
4 Edward Mortimer, 'Bolshevism At The Mercy Of The Republics', *Financial Times*, July 31, 1990.

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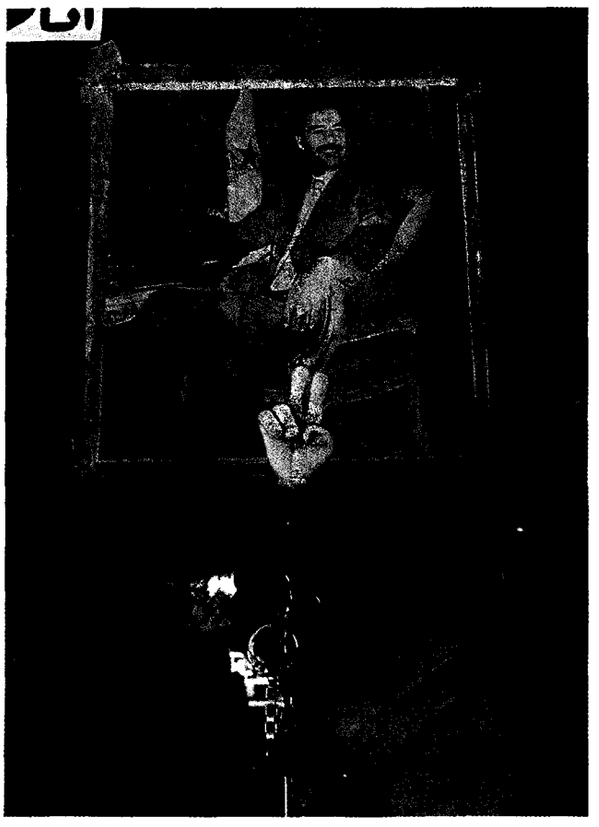
The Global Turn

The cold war may be over, but the shape of the new global order remains unclear. **William Wallace** discusses what it might be



Dario Mitidieri/Select

After the euphoria of the 'peace dividend' and the anticipated transition from military confrontation to economic competition which accompanied the revolutions in eastern Europe, the Gulf crisis offers a different perspective on the post-cold war world. Military power has been reasserted, American global leadership welcomed back, not only within the USA itself but also by many of America's allies in Europe and the Middle East.

Reality rediscovered, or imperial nostalgia? The Gulf crisis throws the emerging postwar order into sharper definition. But the shape which we begin to discern will be far less comfortable for the United States than the Bush administration wishes to admit. And America's allies are almost all reluctant to recognise its shape, given the uncomfortable adjustments which they will also have to make in helping to manage a highly interdependent world.

The evolution of events in the Gulf has of course been profoundly affected by developments in European east-west relations. Soviet-American rivalry in the Middle East had succeeded Russian-British rivalry for influence in Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan as a constant factor in developments around the Gulf. The retreat from superpower ambitions which left the communist regimes of eastern Europe stranded has also left the USSR's Arab clients struggling to find alternative sponsors and arms suppliers, unable to play one camp off against the other. Soviet retrenchment leaves only one superpower to police the world. In the Middle East, as elsewhere, the United States finds itself 'bound to lead' – to use the title of Joseph Nye's recent refutation of the thesis of American decline.

But the Middle East is no 'elsewhere'. The concentration of global oil reserves around the northern Gulf makes the politics of this small group of states and sheikdoms very special. The prospect of Iraq controlling over a third of the world's oil reserves, after the feared push down the coast to Dhahran, provided a more tangible threat to world economic stability than a collapse on the New York or Tokyo stock markets, and far less open to control by the advanced industrial countries.

The concentration of financial power in the Gulf oil-producing states, and the parallel concentration of sophisticated weapons which the industrial countries have competed to sell them, gives this region an importance – and an ability to destabilise the international economic and political orders – unlike any other part of the non-industrialised world.

One uncomfortable aspect of the emerging order is thus the unavoidable vulnerability of the industrialised democracies – the Western, Christian (or post-Christian) world – to developments within the Arab and Islamic world. Hopes that nuclear power would reduce energy dependence on oil, or that exploration would uncover comparable oil reserves outside the Middle East, have been disappointed; continued growth of the world economy in the next decade depends on continued flows of oil through the straits of Hormuz and the trans-Arabian pipelines. Not just the richest countries depend on this. Bulgaria and Poland are lining up alongside Jordan and Turkey in the queue for compensation for the effects of UN sanctions on Iraq, as higher oil prices knock their plans for economic recovery, while less-developed countries fear the impact on their fragile external balances.

But it is the European countries, and the USA itself, which have the most closely-entangled relations with the Arab world. The USA is the sponsor both of Saudi Arabia and Israel, the main external prop for the Egyptian economy, and now the major guarantor of regional stability. With Soviet retrenchment, the 1990s look set to be America's 'moment in the Middle East', just as the period from 1945-56 was Britain's. The commitment to Israel, deeply rooted in the American view of the world, is however a major contradiction: reinforcing radical Arab opposition to US 'imperialism' (as earlier to British), and threatening to turn regional conflict into an ideological clash between Islam and 'Judaeo-Christian' world views.

European countries, with already substantial Muslim populations and the certainty that these will increase – through their higher birth rates, through legal and illegal immigration – during the next decade, are more intimately linked to their Arab neighbours. Each crisis, in Libya, Lebanon, Kuwait, illuminates the European expatriate communities which are the counterpart of Europe's Muslim communities. The European Community is the dominant trade partner of most Middle Eastern countries, while Middle East markets matter to European manufacturers.

The straits of Gibraltar and Hormuz offer a predictable focus for international tension and military intervention for the foreseeable future. Arab and Islamic disunity, oil wealth, external dependence on Gulf oil, and the fragility of societies experiencing rapid modernisation and Western 'penetration', make for an unstable mixture. But military force is likely to be a much less valuable currency for power and influence elsewhere. The key to future stability in central and eastern Europe, perhaps even in the Soviet Union, lies in external economic, educational and technical assistance, not in the balance of military power. The collapse of domestic order in, say, Bulgaria or Albania would neither threaten world stability nor attract external intervention, unless from reluctant neighbouring states concerned about the over spill of violence and refugees. The USA and its allies have readily left the problems of Sri Lanka to the Indian government, of

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Liberia to the Nigerian; and both seem likely to emerge from their involvement bloodied.

What we may well discover, emerging from the heat and dust of the Gulf crisis, is a world divided into three camps on a basis rather different from those which we have grown used to over the past 40 years. The new 'first world' will additionally include most of those countries which under the cold-war paradigm belonged to the Second: certainly the ex-socialist states of eastern Europe, already setting their sights on joining the European Community, quite possibly also the majority of the republics which constitute the Soviet Union. And it will include some – but not all – East Asian countries, following the path which Japan has taken into the OECD and international respectability.

The Middle East will constitute a loose 'second world', with claims to share an alternative ideology and culture, posing a perceived threat to the security and way of life of 'first world' countries – against which those countries will take concerted precautions. The 'third world' will consist of those countries left behind by rapid technological change and held back by explosive population growth, poor government, and insufficient resources of food and energy. These will fall further behind, as the absence of cold-war competition reduces their ability to bargain for external support. We may anticipate drought, famine, disease, civil war: Malthusian remedies for a Malthusian nightmare. We are after all already witnessing their operation in parts of south Asia and Africa, with the countries of the first world paying intermittent attention and offering limited help.

Here again the human exodus provoked by the Gulf crisis has thrown into sharp relief an emerging, and extremely uncomfortable, phenomenon of the global order we are entering. The army of poor expatriates, spilling out from already over-populated Bangladesh, the Philippines, India, Egypt, operating on the margins of wealthier societies while providing through remittances a crucial contribution to their home countries' survival, will swell year by year. Vietnamese 'boat people', Moroccans in francophone Europe, Tunisians and Sudanese in Italy, Latin Americans slipping into Spain, Chinese and Filipinos even infiltrating Japan, and all attempting to enter North America; driven by population pressure as much as by individual initiative and ambition, and met by increasingly severe efforts to police the frontiers which mark off the rich world from the poor and to maintain the distinctions between privileged and underprivileged.

The Gulf crisis conjures up the old image of American leadership and allied 'followership', with Britain regaining its proud position as America's most loyal follower. That may continue to be the case in global approaches to Middle East problems, for the exceptional reasons spelled out above. For most other issues, however, we are entering an awkwardly multipolar world, the rules of which will be made and enforced through multilateral bargaining and collective action. The United States will nevertheless remain the single most important actor, for three reasons: its economy is still the world's largest; its position as the world's strongest military power is entrenched by Soviet abdication of its military ambitions; and it alone retains the ideology of political leadership.

The spectacle of American officials demanding financial contributions from their allies to support action taken by the USA on their behalf and in support of the Western concept of international order, however, demonstrates the future limits of American leadership. Financial constraints, above all the refusal of the United States to support the pound in the international exchange markets, ended Britain's moment in the Middle East in mid-Suez crisis. Financial constraints and external debt now force the USA in its turn to carry its partners with it, to curb its preference for unilateral action in favour of multilateral concertation – through the Group of Seven, through Nato, even through the UN Security Council.

In military action, in the current Gulf operations as in earlier naval operations in the Gulf and military intervention in the Lebanon, the US has so far insisted on retaining independence of command. But in politico-economic actions it has already abdicated leadership: most explicitly in assistance for political and economic transition in eastern Europe – a central issue for Western security as defined by Nato – for which the Group of Seven (G-7) agreed on an American proposal that the European Community should manage the Western response, and thus also provide the major part of the resources needed.

But how do we *organise* collective leadership for this new world order? What should be the rules and conditions under which that order should be maintained?

Institutional frameworks and membership of any concert of powers go closely together. The globalisation of Nato, currently a focus for enthusiasm in Washington and London, would entrench American leadership, and leave Japan expected to contribute financially to decisions taken by others; it is thus unacceptable to several of America's key European and Asian allies. The Group of Seven includes Japan but excludes the Soviet Union. The UN Security Council is thus the USSR's preferred forum; though the absence except when elected of Germany and Japan, the presence of China as an extremely uncertain partner, and the necessity of carrying with them a number of representative smaller states, raise doubts in Moscow as in Washington.

The suggestion floated in London that President Gorbachev might be invited to participate as an observer in the next G-7 summit is thus not entirely fanciful. His attendance would symbolise the sharing of responsibilities and concerns among the 'major' powers – to the satisfaction of most within the OECD world, and very probably the consternation of most governments outside.

But the Soviet Union is already as much an object of global concern as a partner in the management of the international political system – let alone the global economy. Surplus economic resources, above all of credit, are needed to exercise influence and promote economic development and polit-ical stability. The demands upon the surplus countries – which means above all Germany (or, more diffusely, the EC) and Japan – are already unsustainable in terms of their own domestic politics: from the formerly socialist countries, from the USSR, from countries like Turkey and Egypt on the borders of Western prosperity and security concerns, from debt-laden less-developed countries, and now from the USA itself. And neither the west Europeans as a group, nor Japan and Germany as individual countries, have any clear sense of global role or responsibility to justify to their publics the financial transfers which are demanded.

The United States has the desire to provide 'global leadership' without the resources to succeed. The West Europeans and the Japanese have the resources without the desire. Most other states and groupings are too preoccupied with internal difficulties to address the issue of how to establish a stable, peaceful and prosperous global order in place of the partial stability provided by the cold war.

American leadership has thus been reasserted on an unsustainable basis. The global parochialism of US politics is evident in the assumption that America's allies should accept its world view, and provide the means to support it, without recognising their own priorities and perspectives – let alone those of the Arab world. But the parochial self-interests of Japan and western Europe, and the self-preoccupation of most other states, do make for a political vacuum which the United States feels bound to fill.

We need stronger institutions for collective action in an intensely interdependent world. But we cannot construct them without a far more painful rethinking of assumptions about shared interests and the character of a post-cold war order than is yet evident in any industrial democracy – as their divergent reactions to the Gulf crisis have shown. But it is up to the industrial democracies to define and describe the shape of an acceptable international order, however painful to domestic preconceptions that may be. The rest of the world is too distracted, or too weak, to make the attempt.●

'The parochial self-interests of Japan and western Europe make for a political vacuum which the United States feels bound to fill'

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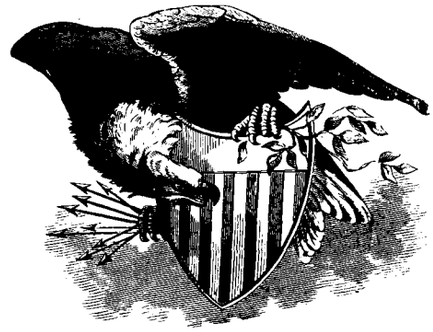
Orders For A New World

The Gulf has served to remind us that the US remains a formidable global superpower. **Martin Walker** assesses the prospects for the United States in the post-cold war era



The dollar bill is an American icon, the traditional symbol of economic supremacy. On the back is a curious masonic symbol, a single eye in the pinnacle of a pyramid, surmounting the Latin phrase *Novus Ordo Seclorum*. It translates as New Order of the Ages, a promise on every greenback.

The end of the cold war, the strategic retreat of the Soviet Union from the centre of world affairs and the Gulf crisis have combined to bring the dollar bill's motto to life. In the first formal presentation of the Bush administration's Persian Gulf policy to the US congress, secretary of state James Baker spelt out the new order, an American foreign policy of stunning ambition.

'Our strategy is to lead a global alliance, political alliance if you will, to isolate Iraq politically, economically and militarily,' Baker began. 'The world must stand united to defend the principles that are enshrined in the UN Charter. In this effort, America must lead, and our people must understand that.

We remain the one nation that has the necessary political, military and economic instruments at our disposal to catalyse a successful response by the international community. Geographically, of course, we stand apart from much of the world, separated as we are by the Atlantic and the Pacific. But politically, economically and strategically there are no oceans. And in a world without oceans a policy of isolationism is no policy at all. Only American engagement can shape the peaceful world that our people so deeply desire.'

The most remarkable feature of this claim to global leadership is its novelty. Two months earlier, at the international economic summit in Houston, President Bush had acquiesced in the establishment of an alternative and rather humbler strategic vision. Margaret Thatcher had defined it best, as a tripolar world of democratic capitalism 'based on three currency zones, the dollar, the yen and the D-mark'.

This was also based on a realistic assessment of America's diminished economic role in the world, from some 52% of global GNP in 1946 to an average 26% for the past decade. One bitter French Euro-diplomat muttered at President Bush's celebratory Texas rodeo that, 'it has the look of an alternative universe in which world war two ended with a draw in 1943'.

The cautious respect the Germans and Japanese have recently shown for their (American-drafted) constitutional restraints on deploying armed forces overseas has overturned that concept. The tripolar world was stillborn. On the newly-macho Washington cocktail circuit they are dismissed as the Wimps of Weimar, the Timid Teutons and the Jumpy Japs.

A distinction must be made here between the Bush administration and its political and media courtiers, who are essentially reacting to several immediate and intellectually destabilising crises, and the deeper wisdom of the American foreign policy establishment, which has been very seriously rethinking the country's position in the world. We will shortly examine these deeper currents, but it is important to consider how many different strategic revolutions are besetting the overworked and relatively small teams of crisis-managers on the seventh floor of the State Department and in the National Security Council of the White House.

Washington does not seem to have comprehended that the main reason for the patchy attention paid to the Gulf crisis by Bonn and Tokyo is that those countries' best official brains are preoccupied elsewhere. Germany can think of little but its own unification, and Japan is obsessed with the cracking of the Korean frontier, which threatens the emergence of another Asian regional power on its doorstep. A united Korea will have the population of a united Germany, with an army six times larger than Japan's, and a fraction of Japan's GNP.

The dramatic changing of the old strategic order in Europe is being echoed not only in the Gulf and on the Pacific rim, but in southern Asia too, where the threat of a new Indo-Pakistani war over Kashmir has not eased with the fall of Benazir Bhutto. We are undergoing the upheavals, and perhaps even the wars, of the Soviet succession, as the implications of the Kremlin's retreat are seized by Germany, Korea, Iraq and India, the powers on the periphery of the old Brezhnev empire. The ferment in Central America is but the oceanic result of Moscow's decline, much as 18th-century France lost her empire in the Indies through defeats in Europe.

These developments, coinciding with a period of American gloom at their slowing economic growth rates, caught the US establishment by surprise. They are still thinking the problem through. The best-known theory came from the State Department's Francis Fukuyama, whose essay 'The End Of History' saw an end to conflicts of ideas and a grand global consensus to explore the various systems of democratic capitalism. One important reason for the serious attention this jolly thesis received was that, at what everyone saw was a pivotal moment in world development, it seemed to imply that Americans need do nothing but lie back and watch the rest of the world try to become just like them, or at least, like South Korea.

At least Fukuyama remembered the poor. There is something breathtaking about the tiredly casual approach which American policymakers now take to the Third World, or to looming global problems like concerted action against pollution and global warming. It seems that much of the Third World's importance was to be a huge and realistic scorecard on which to measure US and Soviet global influence during the cold war. Now that Gorbachev, at the Helsinki summit, has aligned Moscow with the rest of the white, developed world, the Third World has fallen even further down US priorities. The Bush administration may yet pay a stiff price for giving Saddam Hussein such an obvious opportunity to appeal to the rest of the poor and non-white majority of the human race.

Most other American concepts of the new world order have been historically based. Before the Soviet decline be-

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came a nose-dive, it was fashionable to suggest the 21st century would be like the 19th-century European balance of power, with the US, the Soviet Union, the EC, Japan and perhaps China engaging in a stately minuet, a Congress of Vienna set to microchips. There were some other 19th-century assumptions attached: the US would take Latin America; the Japanese could dominate Asia; and the EC could absorb eastern Europe and re-colonise Africa. You could hear all sorts of fanciful models late at night at diplomatic and academic conferences when the bar was about to close.

My favourite was put forward by Poland's Adam Michnik at a session in Moscow's Oktyabraskaya Hotel last October. He entertainingly suggested that the rich, white world of the northern hemisphere was starting to resemble medieval Christendom. A number of different principalities were held loosely together by a single faith, by the élite's shared language of Latin and by the common enemy of Islam, while new forms of commerce and capital organisation sapped at a moribund social and political structure. Substitute the free market for Christianity, English for Latin and our transnational corporations for the Lombard bankers, and allow a bit more erosion of the autonomy of the modern nation-state, and you can see Michnik's point.

The most serious American assessment has come from Harvard professor Stanley Hoffman, writing in the latest *Foreign Affairs*, who says that the nature of power has itself become more complex. He notes that while Japan and Germany can claim economic and technological power, and the Soviet Union still commands military power, and India and China deploy the two-edged power of demographic weight, only the US is still unmistakeably and simultaneously a great economic and military and political power.

This gives him little comfort. Professor Hoffman concludes: 'The world is like a bus whose driver – the global economy – is not in full control of the engine and is himself out of control; in which children – the people – are tempted to step on either the brake or the gas pedal; and adults – the states – are worried passengers.'

It is striking how little sense of celebration the end of the cold war has produced in the US. There has been some relief, and as after the victories in 1918 and 1945, there have been some predictable calls for the legions to be called home from the far-flung garrisons, now that the Evil Empire lies prostrate. These neo-isolationists are not yet taken very seriously.

But it is worth recalling the impressive extent of the sway of what we might teasingly call the Good Empire. The latest survey of the International Institute of Strategic Studies lists US military bases in Britain, Germany, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Norway and the Netherlands; in the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Guam, Australia and in Diego Garcia; in Panama and in Honduras; in Cuba, Bermuda, Iceland and the Azores; and in Egypt, even before the latest build-up in the Gulf.

It is difficult to think of any other nation, at any other time in history, which could within six weeks from a standing start have deployed 150,000 men some 5,000 miles from their bases, with tanks and guns and war-planes to match, and without denuding any of its other outposts around the world. The Nato front remains almost fully manned. The Pacific Command has not even been touched.

From a standing armed force of 2.1m men, and a ready reserve of another 1.65m, Operation Desert Shield accounts for less than 5% of Bush's deployable military force. They could lose the lot to a chemical warfare attack and, awful though it would be, the US military machine would not be seriously damaged by the loss of manpower, equivalent to the whole British army.

The world has not seen this kind of power since the days of the Roman Empire. And look at this phenomenon through Adam Michnik's mischievous eyes. For Latin, substitute American English. For the Roman roads which held the old empire together, substitute the airline routes and the global data networks which are the arteries of our own day. The political system of ancient Rome began as a republic founded on principles of civic virtue, and evolved into what we might call an Imperial Presidency. Sounds familiar?

But the Soviet Union is no Carthage, and however far the decline may yet go, a nuclear-armed Russia will be a force to be reckoned with throughout the next century. Last year, the Soviet navy launched its biggest tonnage of the 1980s, thanks mainly to the 75,000 aircraft carrier Tbilisi, the first of three such carriers which can bear serious comparison with the US fleet. Bush and Gorbachev announced at Helsinki that they would 'direct their foreign ministers to work with countries in the region and outside it to develop regional security structures', and Moscow retains the naval and military strength to take a full part in a white man's condominium over the Arab world.

And Iraq is not the Gothic hordes. It is, instead, the perfect fall guy, offering the US the perfect crisis. Saddam Hussein is the perfect villain. The rich but impotent Gulf states are the perfect protectorates. The Soviet Union, grateful at this beleaguered moment to be treated as a strategic equal by Bush, is the perfect associate. And Moscow's complaisance has made the United Nations Security Council into the perfect vehicle to vindicate American power with the mantle of the international community. In this sense, the Gulf crisis has given both the US and the Soviets a last chance to cut rather grander international figures than their economies really permit.

'We are more economically vulnerable than we ever should be. Americans must never again enter any crisis, economic or military, with an excessive dependence on foreign oil and an excessive burden of federal debt,' President Bush told the joint session of congress on September 11. It is a pious wish, from the leader of an economy sliding into recession, with its military deployment in the Gulf uncomfortably dependent on the dole paid by its richer allies.

'The US is not displeased by the role of a global supercop, with a badge issued by the UN, and junior constable Gorbachev patrolling alongside'

American anger at the reluctance of Germany and Japan to click their heels and obey when Washington calls is tinged with apprehension. These allies are not just setting their own foreign policies; they are slipping out of the American orbit. Thatcher was right about the tripolar world. Washington's cosy assumption that the putative Fourth Reich would be tamed by European unity and a new Rising Sun would be cooled by the other Pacific rim countries now looks rather shaky. This is not (or not yet) a fear that they will become military superpowers; more a dawning conviction that the military arsenals which cracked the Soviet and bent the American economy are less and less relevant to the challenges of the future.

We are witnessing the birth of the Bush doctrine, a strategy to minimise the implications of American economic and social decline through vigorous exploitation of the leverage available to the world's unique superpower, now that the Soviet retreat has given President Bush the impunity, and Saddam Hussein has provided the occasion, to wield it. America is currently enjoying a brief window of strategic opportunity. Saddam Hussein has chosen the precise moment, after the Soviet retreat but before the Pentagon budget cuts, when the US military machine was at maximum strength to impose its strategic will upon an uncertain future.

'Long after our troops come home, and we all hope it is soon, there will be a lasting role for the US in assisting the nations of the Persian Gulf. Our role, with others, is to deter future aggression. Our role is to help our friends in their own self-defence. And something else – to curb the proliferation of chemical, biological, ballistic-missile and above all nuclear technologies,' President Bush told congress.

The US is using this last chance to establish strategic bridgeheads for the worrying future, securing the Gulf, and ensuring that it retains a virtual monopoly on global violence. The US is not displeased by the role of global supercop, with a badge issued by the UN and junior constable Gorbachev patrolling alongside. To amused eyes in Tokyo and Berlin, this may look like a modern version of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. They should first wait and see whether the US does finally withdraw its troops and ships from the Gulf. The dollar may no longer be what it was; but for the moment, the US has the untrammelled power to redeem the banknote's promise of a New Order for the Ages.●

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Straight Talking

A Conversation

What if sanctions don't work? To invade or not to invade? **Fred Halliday** and **Joe Stork** debate the issue

Halliday The core issue remains the question of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and, by extension, its regional consequences. The question that always has to be asked is how this affects the interests of the people in the Middle East as a whole. By that I don't just mean the peoples of the Arab world, but also Israel, Turkey and Iran, as well as those without countries who are involved, particularly the Kurds.

There is one surprising aspect of this crisis that I would like to mention. After two decades of everybody saying that Arab unity in the political sense had finished, that it had died with Nasser in 1970, that the Arab world would not unite, you now see a very strong unificatory current in the Arab world. It's not just confined to the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait and the justifications for it, you also see it in the unification of the two Yemeni states which took place in May.

So history has turned a circle. You now have an apparent revival of the slogans of secular nationalism and Arab unity at a time when people were not expecting it. In that sense the Iraqi regime is the inheritor of policies and slogans that go back to the heyday of Arab nationalism in the 50s and 60s, and of course added to that is the slogan of anti-imperialism, confrontation with the United States, with Britain and at the same time with Israel.

But the political character of the Iraqi mood is very different to that of Arab nationalism in the 1950s and 60s. The Iraqi regime is a fascist regime in two senses. First, it is racist. Baathist ideology is a mythical, mystical and bombastic evocation of the greatness of the Arabs, as represented in the swaggering style of the regime, but also in the racist attitudes it adopts to non-Arabs, to Kurds, to Persians, to Jews and by extension towards the rest of the world. One can even see this racism in the way the Iraqi occupation forces have treated the different peoples in Kuwait. They have treated the Arabs reasonably well, they've treated the Westerners not that badly, but Filipinos, Bengalis and so on have been treated appallingly, raped, beaten up, killed, herded into the desert.

It's also fascist in the kind of terror which it carries out within Iraq, which should never be forgotten, the killing of tens of thousands of people, the systematic torture of opponents, the reign of terror which has characterised this regime since 1968. I would compare the political record of the Baathist regime with that of Israel.

The Israeli regime has rightly been condemned for its policy towards the Palestinians. It has denied them their rights as a Palestinian nation, it has brutally suppressed the democratic rights of the Palestinians, and it has occupied the land of others. But if you compare the toll of human misery visited by the Iraqi regime on its own people, and now by extension on others, frankly there is little to choose between them. In some respects the Israeli record is better. The Palestinians living under Israeli rule have more political rights, and are treated less brutally, than the Kurds living under Iraqi rule. If you add up all the casualties of the Arab-Israeli wars, including those in Lebanon in the last 40 years, you will find that they certainly don't reach the level of destruction wrought by Iraq in its war with Iran. This is not a popular comparison to make, but it is an important one for setting this regime in some context.

Stork An issue here is what I would call the class question: the use of resources, the exclusive appropriation of wealth by these small ruling families. Saddam is seen as an alternative to that in part of the Arab world. This is a misperception in many ways. The misuse and greed of the Sabah family in Kuwait, astounding as it may be, and they are far from the worst offenders among the princely families in the Gulf, has to be set against the tremendous misuse of resources by Saddam's Iraq. It hasn't been flagrant abuse, it hasn't been thrown away in the casinos of the Riviera, but it has been thrown away on Exocet missiles and tanks. We're talking about a country that was responsible for 17% or 18% of the total arms imports in the Third World in the decade of the 1980s. It was not a case of a poor country invading a rich country, it's a case of a rich country invading a rich country.

Halliday There's no doubt that Saddam's policies prior to August 2, confronting the West and Israel, and even more so since, have aroused a great current of sympathy in much of the Arab world. And the longer this crisis goes on the more this sympathy will grow, including in countries that are officially allied against him – Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt and others. This is most evident among the Palestinians.

Now why people should sympathise with Saddam, including people who are well aware of his human rights record, is fairly evident. It is a protest solidarity. Here is somebody who is standing up for the Arab world, who is at last doing something. But if one stands back and says, 'Does Saddam Hussein's Iraq, both before and after his invasion of Kuwait, advance the interests of the peoples of the Middle East as a whole?' the answer in must be 'no'.

Let's take two simple issues: overcoming the colonial legacy and the Palestinian question. If you are going to say that Kuwait is a colonial entity, then so is Iraq. On the logic Saddam has used to justify the occupation of Kuwait, that this entity was set up by colonialism, Iraq should also be abolished as a state, Iraq should be dismembered, as was originally the plan after the first world war, on a democratic basis. There should be an independent Kurdish state; there should be separate states for other parts of the Arab population if they so wish. So you cannot solve the colonial legacy by arbitrarily changing frontiers. This is simply a red herring.

Secondly, Palestine. Saddam pro-

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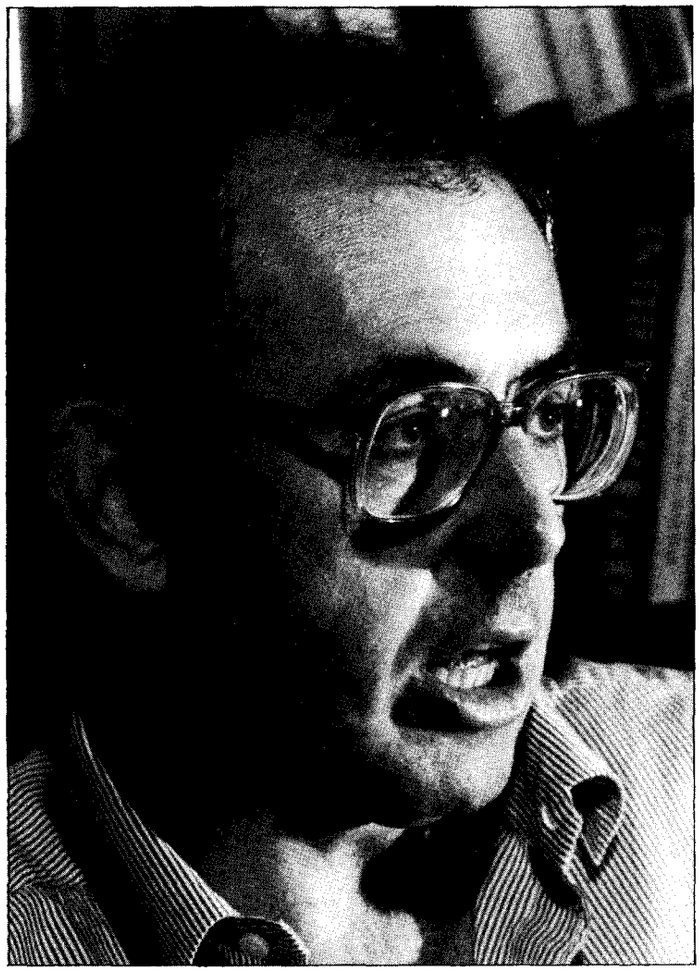
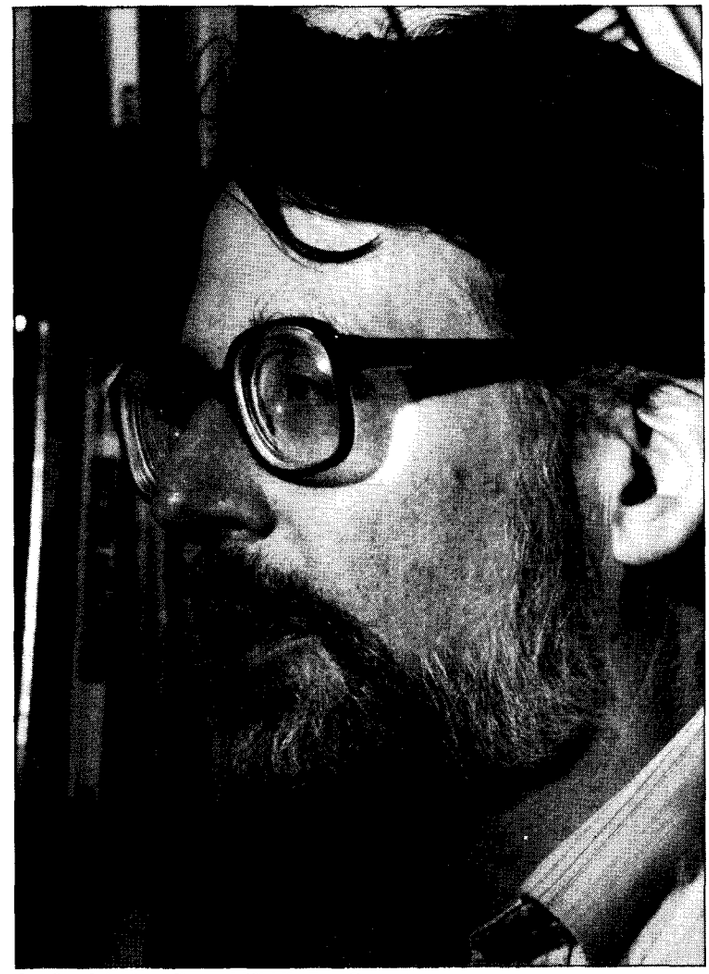


Fred Halliday is professor of international relations at the London School of Economics



Joe Stork is the editor of *Middle East Report*

Photography: Abel Lagos

claims himself to be a supporter of the Palestinians. Most Palestinians seem to believe this. What validity is there for this? Look at Saddam's past record. The role of Saddam with regard to the Palestinian issue has been a manipulatory one. It is he who assassinated Palestinian leaders who wanted some kind of compromise with Israel. He has never taken the decisive step of saying that he is prepared to recognise a Palestinian state and an Israeli state – without which there can be no solution to the Palestinian question. One has to say that Saddam's record prior to August 2 has objectively served the interests of entrenched forces in Israel. Saddam Hussein does not want to see an independent Palestinian state.

His actions on August 2 and since have only compounded this. Most of those in Israel who were prepared to accept the Palestinian state have now been thrown off balance. They're not prepared to continue the dialogue with the Palestinians. Arafat has, for reasons of short-term benefit, particularly in wanting to move the PLO headquarters from Tripoli to Baghdad, sided with the Iraqis. This has caused immense problems for the PLO. This is the most serious mistake made by the Palestinian leadership since the rejection of partition in 1947. It is a disastrous policy and it could cost the Palestinians very dear indeed. It may be that out of all this will come an international conference on the Middle East, which will lead to a Palestinian state, but I doubt it, because the Israelis don't want it, the Syrians won't want it, and the Iraqis certainly don't want a solution to the Palestinian question, let's not pretend they do.

Stork We should try and address what seems to be the main issue here: what should be the response of progressive forces in the West to this invasion? I have come down on the position of neither imperialism nor fascism. However much we would like to see Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime vanish from the face of the earth, the question has to be asked: at what price?

The threat that Saddam represents, he's represented for a long time. It's not something that began on August 2. He made a move on August 2 that set up all sorts of opportunities to reshape the political map in the region. But the United States should not be allowed to shape it alone. I think the issue is: do we support American military intervention in this instance? It was obviously not done in the name of democracy or human rights or any kind of anti-fascist crusade. It was done to preserve a friendly hegemony in the region; if not an American hegemony, then a hegemony of friendly forces, such as the Saudi regime.

Halliday A lot of people outside the Middle East, in Britain and the States, have opposed the American policy for general political reasons that are re-levant, but may lead to mistaken conclusions.

One is a general hostility to war – and there's a mobilisation of peace sentiment around that. The fact is there is already war. Iraq has invaded Kuwait. And unless you adopt a thorough-going pacifist position, the normal, justified, response to aggression is to try and resist, to try and turn it back. That doesn't mean that all forms of response are justified. But the possibility of a military response to a war that has already been started by what is in effect a fascist state seems to me to be something that has been too quickly excluded by many in the peace movement.

Secondly, there are people who say we should not oppose Saddam because the Palestinians and other oppressed peoples in the Middle East support him. This, of course, goes to the heart of the nature of solidarity. Is solidarity about the uncritical support of whatever oppressed peoples say, or is it an attempt to distinguish between whatever oppressed peoples may say at a particular time and what, in the view of any outside observer, are the long-term interests of

Stork: 'However much we would like to see Saddam vanish from the face of the earth, the question has to be asked: at what price?'

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that oppressed people? And my argument would be that the long-term interests of the Palestinians, for an independent and democratic Palestine side by side with an Israeli state, do not lie in siding with Saddam, whatever they may now think.

Now this brings us to the question of what attitude to adopt to Western military activity in the Gulf. The premise of much of the discussion seems to be that whatever Western powers do must be wrong. Now if this means that whatever they do is self-interested, this is clearly the case. The United States has gone into the Gulf to protect its strategic interests and protect oil. But this is not the same thing as saying that whatever they do in the Gulf, or what Britain does, is to be opposed. There are plenty of cases where the actions of such states, however self-interested, may have positive consequences. The role of Britain and the United States in fighting the fascist powers in the second world war is an obvious case. The role of the US congress in putting economic sanctions on the racist regime in South Africa over the last two or three years played an important part – not a decisive, but a very important part – in weakening the South African government.

I would regard the measures taken under the, to date, five resolutions of the United Nations as the appropriate ones to have taken. In other words, that Iraq is called on to withdraw from Kuwait, that sanctions are declared. And I would not think that at a future juncture, if sanctions fail, that military action to oust Iraq from Kuwait would be unjustified.

Now this brings us to the question of who does it, and at this point critics of Western policy tend to get rather vague. They say there should be an Arab solution. Well, frankly an Arab solution means no solution. An Arab solution means the Iraqis stay in Kuwait; we all know the Arab world is completely divided and ineffectual. Then it is said that, somehow, a United Nations force should operate. Fine, that would be quite appropriate. But this will involve, among others, Western armies. So I would hope very much that there could be a peaceful solution to this question, but I do not object to the role of Western armies in this, in the pursuit of what are legitimate international goals.

I regard them as legitimate for two reasons. First, in my view the defeat of the Iraqi regime is in the interests of the peoples of the Middle East as a whole, including the peoples of Iraq. Secondly, if you do not stop the takeover of weaker states by stronger states, there's going to be more cases of this. The Arab states cannot live in a moral and political universe of their own without reference to the rest of the world. And to allow Saddam to get away with this would mean that this example went all round the world.

Stork Whatever happens, I think it is vital to avoid a shooting war. There is war and war. At the moment we don't have a shooting war.

Halliday: 'I do not object to the role of Western armies in this, in the pursuit of legitimate international goals'

Halliday It may well be that sanctions will persuade Saddam to withdraw. I think Saddam could withdraw from Kuwait. It comes down to a judgment of his, which we can't predict. But the question still has to be posed: if he doesn't, what then happens, and who does it? And I repeat, I don't think the region can come up with a solution, any more than it has come up with a solution on Lebanon or the Palestine question or the Sudan or Morocco. And at that point you have to say, which would you prefer: Saddam sits in Kuwait and becomes the undisputed dominant force in the region, or, somebody does something about it, even if it's the West? I would favour the West doing something about it.

Stork Even if Saddam does sit in Kuwait, I'm not entirely clear who would be the dominant force in the region. What you will see – almost whether or not he withdraws is a new coalition against him. It will most likely not leave him in Kuwait, but it could. I think that is a possibility. It would be a terrible thing, but to tell you the truth I'm not sure how I would come down on that eventuality, because I'm not sure that it would be worth having Western forces intervene. I'm not sure that the cure's better than the disease.●

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Foreword by **Sir Anthony Parsons**

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The Independent, 11th August, 1990

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The Quest For Peace

Roger Owen examines the impact of the Gulf crisis in the Middle East and possible outcomes

The origins of the present Gulf crisis go back to the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988. Iraq and its president, Saddam Hussein, were left with a huge army, enormous international debts and a still unsatisfied desire for leadership of the Arab world. One immediate issue was its relations with its oil-rich neighbours to the south who had provided it with the loans to keep its war-effort going. In talks with the Kuwaitis, who sent a delegation to Baghdad in January 1989 to settle outstanding differences, Saddam Hussein not only demanded the cancellation of his debts but also, in some accounts, a regular subvention of $10 billion a year. However, the Kuwaitis were not subject to strong Iraqi pressure until March of this year, when Saddam Hussein began an attack on their policy of keeping the international price of oil low by producing more than their Opec quota. In doing this he must also have been influenced by the positive signals he was receiving from Tehran about Iranian willingness to conclude a peace treaty with Iraq – something which would do much to reduce the danger of its opposition to any move against Kuwait.

Nobody knows when Saddam Hussein made his final decision to invade, but the best guess is that it was some time in July. He seems to have calculated that there would be only a small international response and that, if he moved fast enough, he would be able to use agents to lay claim to most of the money lying in the Kuwaiti government bank accounts around the world. He may also have been emboldened by the rapturous response he had received from large numbers of Arabs to the threats he had made to Israel and to his challenge to the West before and after the Bazoft affair the previous March. At any rate, he was clearly surprised, first by the speed of the American-orchestrated move to block Kuwaiti accounts and to impose sanctions – including the cutting of the Turkish and Saudi pipelines which took Iraqi oil to the West – and then, when it looked as though he might be about to push on into Saudi Arabia itself, to the dispatch of US troops.

Once President Bush decided to allow himself a military option, the whole crisis took on a new character. Arabs who had previously attacked Saddam Hussein for his invasion of Kuwait now turned around to vilify the Americans instead. Meanwhile, from Washington's point of view, the dispatch of enough troops to defend Saudi Arabia provided the joint chiefs of staff with sufficient weapons and firepower to allow them to contemplate a counter-attack which would not only drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait, but also destroy much of Iraq's war-making capacity at the same time – including its chemical weapons.

The long military build-up has allowed time for various international peace plans to be put forward as well as for questions to be asked about the aims, the cost and the existence of possible alternatives. In these circumstances it probably does not matter that any particular initiative, whether by the secretary general of the United Nations or King Hussein of Jordan, has ended in apparent failure. Saddam Hussein is not yet under sufficient pressure to need to consider withdrawing his troops from Kuwait. President Bush has not had to face the decision of whether to veto a plan which might leave Iraq with some of its gains. What is more important is that there has been an opportunity for various ideas to be aired. And, if there is to be an eventual settlement, it will almost certainly contain bits and pieces of these same plans, for example, a referendum on Kuwait's future to be held after an Iraqi withdrawal, or the promise of a future international conference which would consider other regional problems, notably the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, as well.

President Bush has set himself the task of sustaining maximum domestic and international support for his policies until the military option is ready. This means meeting congressional criticism that America's allies are not doing enough to help while, at the same time, trying to ensure that major states like the USSR continue to voice support for the various United Nations resolutions, including the economic blockade. This is the more difficult as the opinions of both politicians and public can easily be swayed to and fro by news concerning the treatment of Western hostages, the possibility of severe shortages of food and medicine for everyone living in Iraq and Kuwait, or anything else which they read in their newspapers and watch on tv.

One of the many things which both President Bush and Saddam Hussein have to try to come to terms with is the shock waves which the invasion, and the American response, have sent throughout the whole Arab world. Clearly the affair has touched raw feelings which lie deeper even than support for Arab nationalism or the Islamic resurgence, and relate directly to a sense of political impotence and a bitter anger at continued United States encouragement of Israel. Students and colleagues returning from the Middle East report an almost solid support for Saddam Hussein in the streets and villages of Syria, Jordan and Yemen. In Egypt, the government has been sufficiently worried about an anti-American backlash to make desperate attempts to co-opt the opposition politicians and press while instructing prayer leaders in even the smallest mosques to preach sermons in its support. What is also clear is that large numbers of Arabs are persuaded that Iraq's seizure of Kuwait is a valid exercise in Arab unity and that the oil money doled out, however generously, by the ruling families of the Gulf, was not theirs to give in the first place – but belonged to all.

The people most adrift in this tide of feeling are the Palestinians. As far as the leaders of the PLO are concerned, they were well aware of the dangers of following Saddam Hussein's lead too closely but were carried along by the same powerful currents of anti-Americanism at a time when popular frustration at the lack of progress towards negotiations with Israel and the dangers posed by the huge influx of Russian Jews was at its height. The result was an attempt to play safe by finding – or helping to create – a chimerical Arab consensus, which has left them marginalised and without real support anywhere. For some among the leadership the best hope is now seen as a vast explosion in the Middle East which might sweep away the Arab regimes they find most unfriendly; for others a better route forward would be through the international peace conference which might follow a successful international action in the Gulf. Meanwhile, in the occupied territories, widespread vocal support for Saddam Hussein has not, as yet, led the Palestinians to end their necessary caution and to attempt to intensify their intifada by introducing more lethal weapons like molotov cocktails or even guns.

As for two of the major non-Arab states

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in the region, Israel and Iran (the third being Turkey), the crisis has produced a heady mix of possibility and political challenge. So far the Israelis have set themselves the task of trying to maximise the aid they can get from the United States by agreeing to sit tight and to do nothing to exacerbate tension. But they remain deeply worried about some of the possible consequences of American policy so far, notably the arming of Saudi Arabia and talk of a new Middle Eastern order which would not only involve an international solution to the Palestinian problem, but also steps to keep the region free from both the nuclear and the chemical weapons which everybody believes they too possess. Meanwhile, there will be an ongoing concern about events in Jordan and the way in which future events there, including the possibility of social and political chaos, might be put to Israel's advantage – perhaps even as an opportunity to deport large numbers of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza.

Iran's position in the crisis is more equivocal. There is no doubt that President Hashemi Rafsanjani would like to profit from it in every way he can, by exporting more oil and by using it to re-establish ties with the West and to encourage foreign investment in Iran's moribund economy. But he has to take care not to appear either too pro-American or too pro-Iraqi, for in both cases their are powerful political interests poised to object. Certainly his best policy will be to try to maintain a steady course as far as the release of further Western hostages and the improvement of relations with the European Community is concerned. He will increase oil exports, without making any fuss about it, while also allowing Iranian merchants to profit from the many opportunities they will have to breach the UN economic boycott along the 700 mile border with Iraq. If America, the 'Great Satan', complains, so much the better for President Rafsanjani's reputation, provided this does not lead to a boycott of Iran as well.

At the time of writing, war still seems the most likely outcome – but not until December or January at the earliest. After his trip to Helsinki and his talks with President Gorbachev, Bush is committed more than ever to a policy of giving sanctions time to bite. Nevertheless, after a few months, it may well be to his advantage to argue that they are not working, that they cannot be made to work, and that something else needs to be tried instead. If the word of the American force commander, General Schwartzkopf, is to be believed – and we may well be being subject to some disinformation here – he will not have all the tanks he needs before early December. After that there will be the same problem, as with Suez in 1956, of finding a generally acceptable *casus belli*. An ultimatum to Iraq to get out of Kuwait or run the risk of a graduated set of military responses, beginning with a powerful air strike, would seem the most likely option. However, the risks from an American point of view will be great. There will be many casualties among the troops involved and many more among the Iraqi civilian population, including the Western hostages. It runs the risk of huge anti-American demonstrations throughout the Arab world and, just possibly, the overthrow of some of the pro-American regimes. And, when it was all over, Saddam Hussein could still be in power in Baghdad with his troops in or near Kuwait. At this stage Bush might feel that he had no option but to make a second attempt, perhaps by calling on fresh supplies of ground troops from a Nato ally like Turkey. The result would have to be an all-out invasion of Iraq itself.

The second most likely outcome would seem to be an Iraqi withdrawal from most of Kuwait. Indeed, Saddam Hussein seems to have prepared himself, and his people, for such an eventuality. He has redrawn the boundary between his new Kuwaiti province and that of Basra province to the north in such a way as to strip Kuwait of its northern oil field as well as the strategically important islands of Bubyan and Warba which would give Iraq a direct outlet to the Gulf. Some have also suggested that by filling Kuwait with Iraqis and others he has his supporters in place ready to participate in any post-withdrawal refendum to be run under the auspices of the United Nations or the Arab League. However, Saddam Hussein will only withdraw from Kuwait City if he feels that he has no alternative and if he is still in a position to argue that he could return at some later date.

The third, and least likely, alternative would seem to be the year or so of sanctions and military preparedness which President Bush and his advisors have sometimes told the American people lies ahead. This would increase the internal strains within Iraq, but it would exacerbate the tensions within the American alliance even more. In some countries pressures to breech the economic boycott would become unstoppable, in others, particularly in the Arab world, popular resentment would pose a real threat to pro-American regimes. Altogether it would introduce a real test of nerves which neither a democracy nor an authoritarian regime would be well placed to cope.

As for the medium-term future, there has already been talk of a new Arab, or a new Middle Eastern, order. Bush and his American advisers are clearly looking for a way of encouraging the spread of the forces now at work in Europe to the rest of the world – under American auspices. However, he needs to be reminded that the recent history of the Middle East is littered with attempts to create Western-dominated security systems, from the Baghdad Pact onwards. All failed for more or less the same reason: Arab unwillingness to take part in a set of alliances which included the major supporter of Israel. In this case, there will also be the obvious problem that America will have to insist that an essential feature of such a system be the security of the ruling families of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, all of whom are open to internal unrest, and who believe that they must stand or fall together.

A better future for the Arab world would be to allow it to make its own institutional arrangements for mutual co-operation, perhaps on a sub-regional basis, with the states of north Africa in one block cemented by their need to attach themselves to the European Community, and the states of the Arab East facing the much more difficult task of finding a way to share the oil wealth of the Arabian peninsula, as well as to solve the festering problems on the West Bank and in Lebanon. However, it is at least a possibility that there will be one more huge shake-up in the East before this is allowed to happen. The present state system there, and the present boundaries, are almost all the product of one war – the first world war. Another major Middle Eastern conflict could lead to some of them being re-drawn once again. Seen from this perspective, Jordan and some of the Gulf sheikdoms look the most vulnerable. But it would be foolish to imagine that their demise would obviously lead to something better. For years Jordan has served as a useful buffer between Israel and the Arabs as well as an active player in Palestinian affairs. Meanwhile, if the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait demonstrates anything, it is the ease with which it is possible to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. The manufacture of oil wealth, and its distribution, are more complex matters than Saddam Hussein, and many others, seem to have supposed.

'Both Bush and Saddam have to come to terms with the shock waves which the invasion, and the American response, have sent throughout the whole Arab world'

Everyone concerned is lucky that the long gap between the decision to dispatch a military force to the Middle East and its readiness for action allows time for second thoughts. There is time to question American aims and time to suggest alternatives. The fact that war seems so likely is the very best reason for pointing to its danger and for urging the soldiers and the politicians to think again. Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait is wrong as well as self-defeating. He shares with Nasser and other Arab leaders the mistaken belief that what is good for his country, is good for any Arab neighbour he might choose to influence and control. But little will be gained by the use of counter-force if it simply adds to the present store of Arab misery and frustration and resentment. The Arabs have to be given the space to try to strengthen their own institutional arrangements for mutual co-operation and to manage their own tentative moves towards greater popular participation and political pluralism. This is the only hope for the Middle East and its peoples.●

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The Great Divide

Europe has become the great divide in the Tory Party. **Andrew Gamble** explains the various positions and suggests that the Thatcherites will ultimately lose

Conservatives have always been divided over Europe but their differences have recently become much more pronounced. The row over Nicholas Ridley's after-dinner observations in the *Spectator* demonstrated just how much Conservatives on both sides of the divide abandoned their normal reserve in front of the cameras and began denouncing one another with unseemly vigour. Terms like federalists and nationalists to characterise the opposing factions have begun to be freely employed.

When Ridley resigned in July, commentators were quick to point out that he was the third senior minister Thatcher had lost because of internal divisions over Europe. Heseltine resigned in 1986 as secretary of state for defence over the prime minister's refusal to back his plans for a European, rather than American, rescue for Westland helicopters. Lawson resigned in 1989 as chancellor of the exchequer because of long-standing differences with the prime minister and her special adviser Sir Alan Walters over Britain's membership of the European monetary system.

All three resignations weakened the prime minister's authority, and focused attention on the policy divisions over Europe within the party. These policy differences have become tangled up with the question of her leadership and the succession. When they debate Europe, Conservatives are also seeking the answer to another question – is there life after Thatcher, and if so whom?

At one level this is about personalities. Who will inherit the golden throne (or poisoned chalice) which Thatcher will leave behind. Leadership contenders come and go, rise and fall. No-one has yet established a secure claim to be heir presumptive. So much will depend on the timing and circumstances of Thatcher's departure.

But the European issue is about much more than just the identity of Thatcher's successor. Because Thatcher herself has become so involved in the issue as a partisan on one side of the divisions in her party that the issue has also become the battleground for the future direction of Conservative policy.

Issues that appear technical and highly complex, such as whether Britain should join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system and if so at what parity and inflation rate, have become invested with the wider hopes and fears which the different factions entertain for the future of the country and the party.

While enthusiasts from the Thatcher Youth still chant '10 more years', most Conservatives and most commentators expect that the prime minister will seek to win one more election and then step down. Most people assume therefore that the post-Thatcher era is almost here. But will Thatcher's departure signal an end of Thatcherism, an end to the strategic objectives which the Thatcher government has attempted to pursue, however inconsistently and incoherently, during the past 11 years? Or will a leadership be found to maintain broad continuity in policy direction?

Attitudes to Europe are rapidly becoming the litmus test, superseding old wet/dry divisions over economic management. As on any other complex issue, positions on Europe within the Conservative Party do not always fall neatly into two camps. Nevertheless, there is increasingly a divide between two approaches to the European Community – the first pragmatic and accom-modating, the second ideological and obstructive.

These two camps are termed federalists and nationalists, but labels disguise a range of different positions and emphases within each. In the nationalist camp three different strands can be identified: isolationists, Atlanticists and market liberals. In the federalist camp there are unionists, realists and market liberals. The picture is further confused because it is quite possible to belong to different camps on different issues. For example, Nigel Lawson may have been a federalist on the ERM, but on the social charter, on political union and on industrial policy he was a nationalist. Similarly, Heseltine and Thatcher take different views on all the above, but on defence both are Atlanticists rather than Europeans.

The two pure positions are isolationist and unionist. Isolationists favour withdrawal from the European Community and support the assertion of national sovereignty in all areas of policy. Unionists by contrast favour rapid political and economic integration leading to the creation of a federal United States of Europe.

There is a sizeable body of opinion in the party which is isolationist, but unionist sentiment is much smaller. The spokesman for the isolationists used to be Enoch Powell. He is resolutely nationalist on all questions including defence, rejecting dependence on the United States as much or even more than he rejects dependence on the European Community. For the isolationists there are no issues which justify the surrender of national sovereignty.

The Thatcherite wing of the party contains many isolationists, but it is not the dominant tendency. Thatcher's position on national sovereignty is complex, since she is such a strong supporter of the Atlantic alliance and American leadership of the West, and she has never opposed Britain's membership of the European Community. She accepts the pooling of sovereignty which membership of Nato and the European Community imply.

The Thatcherite position, therefore, embraces two groups – Atlanticists and market liberals. Atlanticists give highest political priority to defence and security issues. The special relation-

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Illustration: Beverly Levy

ship with the United States must not be compromised by merging British sovereignty into a European union. For Atlanticists, the European Community cannot replace Nato and it is not desirable that it should. Thatcher has no confidence in European political union, and she uses every opportunity to demonstrate that the Europeans are incapable of acting together. The most recent example is her blunt criticism of other European nations for allegedly giving inadequate and lukewarm support to US action in the Gulf.

For market liberals in the nationalist camp, less emphasis is placed on maintaining an independent defence and foreign policy and more on maintaining an independent economic policy. Unlike isolationists, they support the programme of the single market, but they believe that moves to full economic and monetary union, as well as implementation of the provisions of the social charter, risk bringing back many of the evils which the Thatcherite revolution had banished from Britain.

The other countries of the European Community, particularly the original six members, favour forms of state intervention and industrial relations which Britain has rejected. Britain must either convert her partners to Thatcherism, or run the risk of constantly being outvoted, and seeing forms of central planning and collectivist intervention reimposed on Britain by the bureaucracy in Brussels.

A common European currency is opposed because it implies the creation of a European central bank and European state agencies to run a common European monetary and fiscal policy. Under such a centralised regime, countries with higher costs would suffer deflation and unemployment. Britain would be locked into an inflexible monetary and fiscal regime, and the British government would no longer have the powers to decide its own policy.

Thatcher makes use of both Atlanticist and free-market arguments. In her Bruges speech in September 1988 she made it clear that while she supports the creation of a European free market, she is totally opposed to steps leading to any kind of European political union. The Bruges group was founded after this speech to rally opposition both within the Conservative Party and across Europe to progress towards political union. The Bruges group unites isolationists, Atlanticists and market liberals in a coalition against the federalist threat.

The federalists are less well organised. The major standard-bearers of the federalist camp are Edward Heath and Michael Heseltine, both of whom have a strategic vision of Britain's place in Europe. But they do not work together, and neither openly presents a unionist argument. Heseltine in particular prefers to align himself with the realist faction, which has a majority both in the cabinet and among

'In Ridley's political universe it is essential that anything unpleasant being done to the British people should be done by a government accountable to them'

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Conservative MPs.

Currently represented by Douglas Hurd and John Major, the realists have no great enthusiasm for political union but are pragmatic and accommodating to moves to further the integration of the Community. They seek to extend co-operation and build consensus. They tend to be much less ideological than the nationalists; they are less worried about the loss of sovereignty or the imposition of alien policies by Brussels on London. They believe that if Britain is fully committed to the Community it can shape the institutions that emerge and safeguard its interests.

A federalist approach, embracing both realist arguments and a unionist vision, is set out and cogently defended by Michael Heseltine, in his recent book *The Challenge Of Europe: Can Britain Win?*. Heseltine is a committed European and is prepared to go a long way in supporting moves to wider economic and political union. Heseltine presents himself as a post-Thatcherite rather than an anti-Thatcherite.

He supports many aspects of the Thatcherite revolution in policy. But he believes that the next stage of modernising Britain and turning it into a competitive and dynamic industrial society is to build structures of political and economic co-operation in Europe which will not disadvantage European companies in the battle for world markets.

In Europe, Heseltine sees opportunities while Thatcher sees dangers. He stresses the need to construct a suitable institutional framework for European co-operation. He is particularly keen that there should be effective public agencies created that can formulate and protect common European interests. This means both a larger European bureaucracy and budget – like most federalists he points out how tiny both currently are in relation to national bureaucracies and budgets – and democratic accountability through the European Parliament. He proposes among other things the election of a European senate, and the interlinking of the work of national parliaments with the European Parliament.

Market liberals in the federalist camp, like Lord Cockfield, put less emphasis on the political dimension of Europe, more on the desirability of pushing rapidly ahead with economic liberalisation and on economic and monetary union. They have much in common with the market liberals in the nationalistic camp, but tend to view the process of economic integration as more benign, attaching much less importance to the social charter and welcoming the creation of a common currency. Steps to break down local obstacles to free trade and competition, and create a unified economic space with one set of currency arrangements and adminstrative regulations, are perceived as an enormous benefit, which far outweigh the loss of national sovereignty.

'Europe has become the battleground for the future direction of Conservative policy'

The argument between these different market liberals partly turns on different attitudes to Thatcherism. Thatcherite market liberals are proud of the achievements of Thatcherism and anxious that its distinctive identity might be lost. Many pro-European market liberals like Sam Brittan think that Thatcherites are too complacent. They do not believe that Thatcherism has cured all Britain's ills and brought about an economic miracle. Far from Britain being some shining beacon of economic rectitude and success they think Britain could benefit from the tighter monetary discipline of the Europeans and could adopt some of their successful supply-side policies.

The publication in the *Spectator* in July of an interview with Nicholas Ridley was an important political event because it revealed how deep the gulf in attitudes towards Europe in the Conservative Party was becoming. The interview aroused such interest partly because of the candour and crudity with which Ridley expressed himself, but mainly because it was widely assumed that he was merely saying in public what Margaret Thatcher was saying in private.

Ridley had long been close to Thatcher, and after the departure of Nigel Lawson, Lord Young and Norman Tebbit he was widely perceived as the prime minister's strongest ally in cabinet – a privileged member of her inner circle, and licensed to speak out on matters beyond his departmental responsibilities.

Ridley was important to Thatcher in another sense. He had been a Thatcherite before Thatcher. He voted for Powell in the 1965 leadership election which Heath won. He was a strong supporter of the free-market policies initially adopted by the Heath government in 1970 and served briefly as a junior industry minister until Heath got rid of him in 1972.

Ridley has always been close to Thatcher. He helped plan the strategy for tackling the unions and the nationalised industries. As a minister he played a major role in several important privatisations, as well as being responsible for the introduction of the poll tax. After Tebbit, he was the most vocal supporter of the Thatcher revolution among Thatcher's ministers.

The interview in the *Spectator* was certain, therefore, to attract attention. It may even have been intended as a way of expressing the prime minister's views to counter the increasingly dominant pro-Europe direction of the cabinet majority. If so it proved an embarrassing miscalculation and Thatcher had to sacrifice one of her most dependable allies in cabinet.

The Thatcherite wing of the party tried hard to play down the affair and argued that Ridley's remarks were not a resigning matter. They were desperate that the already depleted ranks of Thatcherites in the cabinet should not dwindle still further. This was a view Ridley himself seems to have shared. He clearly cannot have anticipated the impact his interview would have. He concluded it by declaring that he was still at the top of the political tree and was not done yet.

When he returned from his ministerial trip abroad to face the clamour for his resignation he at first tried to delay, indicating that he would only resign if the prime minister informed him that it would be helpful. There then followed a 15-minute telephone conversation with the prime minister, and the resignation was agreed. Thatcher knew that if she did not force Ridley's hand, many of the pro-European wing of the party would abstain, or even vote with the opposition, in any no-confidence motion on the affair. Valuable though Ridley was to her, she could not put her own leadership on the line again so soon after she had been under such challenge from Michael Heseltine in the spring, when the poll-tax debacle was at its height.

Ridley's offence was not what he said, but how he said it. He expressed the real feelings of many Britons, particularly of his generation, to the process of German unification. He appeared less concerned that European integration might reintroduce socialism into Britain by the back door than that it was a cover for the revival of German ambitions to dominate Europe.

Much of the reporting of Ridley's interview suggested that he had compared Kohl with Hitler. The impression was reinforced by Garland's cartoon of Ridley defacing Kohl's poster with Hitlerite features. What Ridley actually said was that if Britain was going to give up sovereignty to the '17 unelected reject politicians' of the European Commission, 'you might just as well give it to Adolf Hitler, frankly'.

But although he did not compare Kohl with Hitler directly, Ridley obviously views the new Germany with great alarm. It is as though the last 45 years have not happened. The German question is back. For Ridley, it seems, the logic of geopolitics and national cultures never change. In his interview he condemns the plans for a joint European monetary policy as 'all a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe'. Germany would soon be trying to dictate Britain's own internal monetary policy and its taxes. With Germany so 'uppity', and the French 'behaving like poodles', it was necessary for Britain once more to preserve the balance of power in Europe.

Ridley maintains that there would be 'absolute mayhem' if economic policy was in future to be determined by 'Herr Poehl and the Bundesbank'. In Ridley's political universe it is absolutely essential that anything unpleasant being done to the British people should be done by a government formally accountable to them.

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He asked his interviewer to imagine what it would have been like to have gone to Jarrow in 1930 and said: 'Look boys, there's a general election coming up, I know half of you are unemployed and starving and the soup kitchen's down the road. But we're not going to talk about these things, because they're for Herr Poehl and the Bundesbank. It's his fault; he controls that; if you want to protest about that, you'd better get on to Herr Poehl.'

Nicholas Ridley the political nationalist here takes precedence over Nicholas Ridley the free marketeer. Free-market liberals like Ridley bitterly attacked Labour politicians for using the 'gnomes of Zurich' or the IMF as scapegoats for unpopular policies. They always argued that Labour governments had to face up to the constraints which operating in a world economic order imposed.

The European Community is different. It was apparently acceptable for Germany and the United States to lay down conditions for Britain to receive help through the IMF in 1976, but it is not acceptable for a European central bank to determine monetary policies for the whole Community. In an interview on *Newsnight* in September, Ridley explained that his objection to other European countries was that they were inward-looking, preoccupied with their own concerns. Only Britain and the United States were outward-looking, and were prepared to make sacrifices for the safeguarding of world order and free trade. If Britain gave up its sovereignty to the European Community, this unique British contribution to the world would be lost.

The Ridley affair underlines that at the heart of the debate over Europe is this question of sovereignty. Two main arguments are put forward by Thatcherites. There is the argument that sovereignty must not be ceded because it would lead to socialism by the back door. And there is the argument rehearsed by Nicholas Ridley that sovereignty must not be ceded because it will lead to political domination of Europe by Germany.

Political union is resisted because of the likelihood that any union would be dominated by non-Thatcherite policies. But if a Thatcherisation of Europe were to take place, as Lord Young used to predict it would, then Britain would have nothing to fear from political union. Indeed political union would prevent the risk of socialism being imposed on Britain through an internal shift of power. It was precisely this aspect of European integration that was the basis of the hostility to Europe within the British labour movement.

The issue of sovereignty creates a serious dilemma for Thatcherites. They support the creation of a European free market, the 1992 programme. They approve of the idea that the freedom of governments should be drastically curtailed by the operation of market forces. But they then want to resist any transfer of formal political sovereignty to supranational bodies. Nation-states must be allowed to impose socialism upon themselves if they choose to.

Thatcherites are being forced to make a choice. Which is more important to them – the Conservative conception of nation defined by language, culture and territory as the basis of political legitimacy; or the liberal conception of the market as a supranational order transcending national governments?

Powell had no doubt about his choice. The nation came first. Its preservation was ultimately much more important to him than the particular economic and social arrangements that were instituted by government. Other market liberals have often put the market first. In the 1930s, Hayek, for example, argued the case for inter-state federalism, as an important element of a global market order.

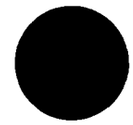
Thatcher has always been ambiguous. She has assented to the process of creating a united Europe by removing barriers to free trade. She signed the Single European Act. But she resists the parallel process to create common political structures to support and guide the common European market. Her difficulty is that the implementation of the free-market programme of which she approves requires the use of the bureaucratic agencies and procedures which she wants curtailed.

Many Conservatives, however, see the two processes as inseparable. Many of those who become involved with the European Community, whether as members of the European Parliament or as European Commissioners, like Lord Cockfield and Sir Leon Brittan, also become converts to the case for more rapid European integration. The business of creating a single market comes to seem more important than the preservation of formal political accountability to national parliaments.

Ridley and Thatcher, as good market liberals, assent to processes like the free movement of goods and capital which radically constrain the sovereignty of any national government. But they resist any diminution of the formal trappings of sovereignty enjoyed by the Westminster parliament. In this sense their fight against those wanting devolution of powers to regions or local communities within the UK, and those wanting the transfer of powers to European bodies, is the same fight. They justify their desire to keep tight central control by involing the mystique of parliament. Thatcher recently declared that other European leaders knew nothing about democracy because they were not accountable in the way that she was.

Thatcher's problem is that at present the pro-European federalist wing of the party is strong and getting stronger. Having fought for so long to keep Britain from joining the ERM, she has had to concede that it is not whether, but when. The cabinet alliance forged between her chancellor, John Major, and her foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, and supported by her former chancellor and foreign secretary, Geoffrey Howe, has left Thatcher with little room for further manoeuvre. Major and Hurd have signalled a much more pragmatic and positive approach to co-operation with Europe, and although Thatcher still does her best to sabotage European initiatives, she cannot block progress indefinitely.

'For the isolationists there are no issues which justify the surrender of national sovreignty'



The next leader of the party is almost certain to be more pro-European than Thatcher. Thatcher has seized the opportunity of the Gulf crisis to reaffirm her commitment to the United States and her lack of commitment to Europe. But there are few in the leading circles of the party who share her antipathy to the other states of Europe. The desire for a real partnership with France, Germany, Spain and the other members of the European Community is now the priority.

The Thatcherites know that without Thatcher's instinctive anti-Europeanism it will be much harder to resist progress towards European unity. But they hope that they can exert enough influence to ensure that the next leader is not strongly pro-Europe, as Heath was. Heseltine is the one they wish to stop. Their problem is that they lack a credible candidate of their own.

In the postwar period, the Conservatives, although at first reluctant, became the party of Europe under Macmillan and Heath. The realities of Britain's economic and strategic position left no other choice. The empire could not be preserved. During her leadership of the party, however, Thatcher has succeeded in casting doubt as to the depth of Conservative commitment to Europe. She has not endorsed Powell's isolationism, but she has consistently given a higher priority to Britain's role as the principal European ally of the United States than as a partner in the European Community.

The Conservatives have become divided over Europe during Thatcher's leadership; more, perhaps, than they have ever been. Will these divisions continue and widen under Thatcher's successor? It seems unlikely, provided the party remains in office. In opposition the European issue could be very hard to handle inside the party and might conceivably lead to a split. In government the issue will be contained. A new Conservative prime minister would make Britain's European links once again become the priority of British policy. Without becoming enthusiastic about political union, Britain would no longer resist pragmatic evolution towards it.

In this way, the post-Thatcher Conservative Party may well return to the path laid out by Macmillan and Heath. History will once more be rewritten, only this time it will be the turn of the Thatcher era to be perceived as an aberration.●

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Europeans By Default

Labour has, at last, become pro-Europe. But it is not yet European. **John Lloyd** argues that it should be

Illustration: Nick Kobyluch

Labour is now all but a European party: its conversion from being the major refusenik in Europe is still one of the many, if minor, political marvels of the age. It may soon steal the last article of social-democratic-liberal clothing it has not so far filched: the many-coloured coat of full europeanism. Its anti-marketeers no longer account for very much; those who have remained faithful to their anti-communitarian principles have been marginalised; those anti-marketeers who have remained in the party leadership have either changed their minds, or shut up.

This turnabout should be marked, of course, for it astonishes when one considers the speed and painlessness with which it was executed. But it is more important to note what has accompained this shift: an obsessive concentration on the short-term advantages which it gives Labour in the British political debate. It is used, with supreme opportunism, to embarrass the prime minister and to widen the splits in her cabinet and party. Naturally, this is a function of an opposition. But a far more important function is to develop the politics of europeanism, the largest political shift Britain will experience in the coming decades. This Labour has simply refused, so far, to do. It is reaping rewards without sowing.

But to register the turnabout first, Labour's Left, in the 70s and in the first years of the 80s, had ensured that the dominant view of the Community was that it was an organised conspiracy against the achievement of socialism: a largely correct one. The Treaty of Rome had enshrined market principles and the Community rules did not allow large and coninuing subsidies to state companies, or monopolies, or intra-Community import controls – all devices which a Labour Britain pursuing the logic of the alternative economic strategy would require to use. Linked to this was a belief that the British labour movement was the strongest and most militant in Europe, if not the world; and that *its* pressure, untrammelled by Community regulations and unsullied by too much contact with the collaborationist German and Scandinavian unions, or the politically split and warring French and Italians, could play the decisive part in securing economic and political shifts.

Thus the Labour MEPs – overwhelmingly, at first, men and women who would have preferred Westminster seats – were themselves dominated by anti-communitarians. Representatives like Richard Balfe, Janey Buchan, Alf Lomas and Les Huckfield saw themselves as a kind of socialist British Expeditionary Force, positioned in Strasbourg or Brussels to stop the advance on the continent.

The high-water mark of the Left's triumph was the 1983 election manifesto, in which a commitment to take the UK out of the Community was

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unambiguously expressed. Yet just as the Left seemed strongest, so this, its central and most crucial policy plank (as Tony Benn rightly described it) was being undermined. Like most Left victories at the time, it turned out to be astonishingly fragile.

There were two main reasons for this, of which the first was the most immediately telling and the second has a longer-term significance. The first is this: that to take the UK out of the Community, especially by 1983, would have required all the strength and commitment of a government which was both socialist and popular, and Labour, as Benn has again correctly observed, is not a socialist party, or insofar as it was one, was not popular for being so. Anti-communitarianism could in theory have worked – if the party had commanded high support, if the policy had widespread popularity, if government, labour and capital had been prepared to work together to raise productivity, quality and output to Japanese levels – so that the markets of the world would, willy nilly, demand such quantities of British goods that the excision of the UK from a free trade area to which the bulk of its exports were directed would be more than compensated.

This was an unlikely outcome, especially given the inability of capital and labour to co-operate successfully at either the company or the national level since the war. Indeed, the Left could provide no answer to this, being at once hostile to capital and at the same time unwilling to take that hostility to the logical conclusion of full-blooded expropriation and its replacement by the state. An uneasy awareness of this may have lain behind the curious paradox that, while commitment to leaving the EC was in the 1983 manifesto, it was not presented as a major element in the election strategy – even by the most enthusiastic of the anti-marketeers.

Second, the 'Eurosclerotic' Community of the 70s, which provided ample scope for a critique, was giving way by the end of that decade to a new and – it is now clear – sustained wave of progress towards the objective of the 1957 Rome Treaty: 'an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe'. The European Monetary System (EMS) was created in 1979, and captured many of the leading currencies (not of course sterling, but crucially the deutschmark). The Stuttgart heads of government meeting of December 1983 restated the Rome Treaty's central objective; and after various initiatives between 1983 and 1985, the Single European Act was adopted in Luxemburg in December 1985, and ratified by July 1987. The act enshrines majority voting, rather than unanimity, for economic measures within the Council of Ministers, thus paving the way for the achievement of the single market in 1992.

In 1985 too, Jacques Delors, a French socialist, took over the presidency of the Community. He brought to it an energetic commitment to its new goals, reflecting the French, and particularly the French socialist, conception of Europe as a nation writ large – no longer the Gaullist '*Europe des patries*', but '*la patrie – Europe*'. He has provided the necessary authority to press ahead both with EMS and towards full economic and monetary union (EMU): the Delors Report, issued last year from the committee of central bankers which he chaired, proposed a three-stage movement to full EMU, starting this year. So far, the British government has refused to participate in even the first of these stages – that is, putting sterling into the EMS. Full EMU, which would require a European central bank, or 'Eurofed', and a single currency, is officially seen as remote and, by the prime minister, as undesirable. The other major states are, however, at least formally enthusiastic – though they are now reassessing their enthusiasm, and the British plan for a parallel currency is gaining support as a transitional route to one currency.

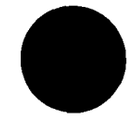
That is one side of the acceleration. It carries with it implications for political union. As the economies become more integrated, so the case for a stronger European Parliament – that is, the case against the 'democratic deficit' – becomes greater. David Martin, the Labour MEP who is vice-president of the European Parliament and rapporteur on European union, has successfully argued for a widening of the intergovernmental conference on EMU to include matters of political union, and for revision of the founding treaties to give the parliament more powers – specifically, in appointing the members of the Commission and in electing the President. Martin argues that, though national parliaments' surveillance of Community affairs should be close and informed, 'only the European Parliament is in a position to exercise effective scrutiny and control over the Commission'.

In the last decade the combination of fragmentation and stasis which marked the EC in the 70s, as each member nation sought a national protection from the oil and other shocks, has been replaced by an agreed process of closer integration of economies and polities which is clearly both highly ambitious – indeed, globally unprecedented – and dynamic, spreading itself throughout ever wider and deeper areas of policy and of life itself.

Further, it is no longer possible – *except for a real socialist* – to cast the EC in the role of a reactionary grouping. Its rapidly developing politics have fitted themselves round the contours of the only Left-Right struggle which still means something: that between social democrats, or leftish liberals, and the various forms of right-wing politics such as Christian democracy and the various faintly nationalist movements, like the German CSU and the French RPR, most of which differ little in substance. Eurosocialism, or for that matter the slowly deflating eurocommunism, has accommodated itself to this, and done so very well: the Left is the largest grouping in the European Parliament. All this has left the true socialists with a terrible if familiar choice – irrelevance or dilution.

Nothing succeeds with the new Labour Party like success; and the electoral surge of eurosocialism, together with the superior organisation and wealth of the European socialist parties – especially the SPD – has drawn Labour ever deeper into the social-democratic European home. It now has something like the form of a European social-democratic party itself. Its front-benchers drop over to Brussels to pursue their particular briefs almost as naturally as ministers. The younger members of the shadow cabinet are generally very pro, as are their coevals among junior ministers and the back-benches. None of the Labour intake of 1987 seems to be other than pro-Community. Even the most ferocious constituency committees do not seem to regard it any longer as a test of obedience.

'Labour has locked itself into a much more overt relationship with capitalism than it has before'



We should see this shift for what it is: not as a shift to a full European politics, but as part of the excision of socialism from the party. It is very largely because it is a by-product of this fundamental domestic change in Labour that the europeanism remains unrealised – though the ground has been cleared for its realisation.

To Neil Kinnock must go a very large amount of the credit for this revisionism in depth. His scrapping of his party's and his own past positions and their replacement with other, sometimes quite opposite, ones has been both rapid and clean. In sum, he has removed from a party which would often call itself socialist (and perhaps still will) any basis for being so. It has been under Kinnock's, much more than under Gaitskell's, leadership that the Left has been crushed. Gaitskell in the end had to be induced to share oppositional power with the leader of the Left, Aneurin Bevan. Kinnock needs to share power with no such figure: there no longer is such a figure with whom to share power, for nobody has been able to pick up Benn's mantle. Labour is now social-democratic. That position is not irreversible, since political parties by their nature can change enormously. But it is as firm as politics allows.

To be 'social-democratic' is quite different from being democratic socialist. A democratic socialist respects parliamentary and other democratic procedures: s/he would be likely to privilege democracy over socialism. But the outcome s/he wants is socialist: that is, s/he wants a society different from that produced from capitalist/market relations.

A social democrat accepts the field as ploughed by capitalist relations, but will argue about the crops: what is planted and how it is tended and harvested. In practice, of course, Labour has never been other than social-

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democrat in government – hence the constant divisions between its socialist supporters and its leaders. But it has been putatively socialist: its leaders have often claimed to want to create socialism, and one of the best ways to leadership positions within it has usually – and since the early 60s has certainly – been to take the role of the avenging leftist impatient with timorousness at the top. Now it is not: it really does want to make capitalism work better.

The shift on Europe has demonstrated this most clearly: it has been much more important than the policy change on defence, or even on trade-union law. For in accepting membership of the Community, Labour has accepted the kind of limits on its economic and social policies which would have been considered wholly inadmissable even five years ago. To restate the point: the anti-marketeers were quite right. Membership of the Community does effectively preclude socialism on any sensible definition. Its charter; its members; its policies, especially on competition; the direction of development – all render the tools of socialist planning and intervention either useless or unlawful. The only leftism practically possible is social-democratic: the only argument worth having *is* about the crops, not about the field.

Labour seems to have accepted all of this. It has now (after some hesitation) declared it would join the European Monetary System. That is, it would put sterling into a tight relationship with the other main European currencies so that, broadly, the strength of the D-mark and the policies of the Bundesbank act as an anti-inflationary anchor on the pound. This has worked well for the franc and lire – though at some estimated cost in both growth and in employment. It is certainly arguable, indeed it is likely, that had sterling been in the EMS, the fall in unemployment over the past three years would have been slower.

Full economic and monetary union (EMU), which keen Europeans like Giles Radice and Brian Sedgemore want their leadership to endorse, would lock sterling irreversibly into the system, and in time see it decline in favour of a common currency administered by a European central bank. If Labour were to move to this position – and it is perhaps close to doing so – it would support a series of arrangements which would considerably constrain the actions of future Labour chancellors, and other ministers – even as it also gives them alibis against spending demands. As Gavyn Davies put it in a recent paper: 'Under full EMU, exchange-rate changes could not be used even as a last resort in response to economic shocks.'

This is not, naturally, an isolated part of Labour's policy thinking. Instead, it is of a piece with the 'supply-side socialism' which has been the economic triumph (that is, triumph over internal opposition) of Kinnock's leadership. Roughly, this means economic and monetary rigour coupled with intervention at the infrastructural, and to a limited degree micro, level to promote efficiency – hence the emphasis on education, training and investment. Shadow ministers have been deeply impressed by the failure of French *dirigiste* socialism in the early 80s, and by a retrospective look at the mistakes of previous Labour governments, which wasted their early political capital in giveaways (to the unions, last time around) instead of getting the ugly business over with early, then reaping the rewards.

'Europe' is thus an accomplice in this: its monetary and other disciplines, ensured by a central bank modelled on the lines of the rigorously anti-inflationary Bundesbank and driven by the German engine, can substitute for the pay policy which a Labour government will not have again. Labour has locked itself into a much more overtly intimate relationship with capitalism than it has before: if it cannot modernise and render competitive the British economy *rather more or less its present structure* it will be seen to fail. Its enthusiasm for the Community is of a piece with this.

But, large as this shift has been, it has not put Labour abreast of politics as they will now develop. It has not explicitly become the European social-democratic party it often claims to be. The critical question is – is this simply a matter of time and movement – another few months, another round of policy changes? Or is it something deeper – an instinct, a set of attitudes, a lack of comprehension or will – something which has not changed and may not do so?

There is still little in the Labour Party's day-to-day output which speaks to an internalisation of the politics of Europe. Most obviously and revealingly, in the joint manifesto on which the socialist parties fought the 1989 election, Labour explicitly dissociated itself from a lengthy section which proposed more Euro-parliamentary control – not the only dissociation made by the signatories, but by far the most important.

Why does not Labour – why *cannot* Labour – grasp this rather obvious political opportunity, leaving it instead to the Liberal Democrats? One reason is that it wishes to be free to move back to a moderately nationalist position should the Conservative Party be led by a communitarian like Michael Heseltine: that is, it is determined to travel *so* light ideologically that whatever position the government adopts, it will find Labour making hay out of its problems.

But there is a deeper reason for this. We do not need 'Europe' in the way many other countries do. Germany and Italy, Spain and Portugal, all required a route out of a more or less dictatorial past, as well as a democratic anchor for a new political practice. It is not in the least surprising that these states are the 'best Europeans' – at least in their rhetorical commitment. They need to be.

'Modernisation within Europe means taking on the matter of sovereignty – perhaps the largest single reason why Labour has not attempted it'

Germany is the outstanding example. It has consciously and actively sought postwar rehabilitation through the Community and until recently allowed its economic strength to be subservient to that. Further, its federal structure provides an internal model to its people of how a future Europe might work, taking the heat out of the issue of sovereignty. In spite of the overdone fears of Western commentators (and German intellectuals), the country remains democratic, pacific and anchored in the Community because its national interest is there being served. It will be, unequivocally, the leading power – but to confuse that fact with Ridley-esque nightmares about Panzers is reactionary politics.

In simple terms, a large part of our experience, and our mythic view of ourselves, is felt to be the opposite. The view that parliamentary sovereignty and a strong navy preserved freedoms when, across the Channel, European states were losing theirs, is a crude perception with sufficient elements of practical reality to give it force. Even now, when Ridley's interview exposes the hollowness of the isolationist position, the alternative case is not strongly made because it is not strongly based. It is not *felt to be needed.*

There is however a major European power which did not have the needs of Germany, Italy and the rest, but which is in the van of European union – and is moreover led by a socialist party. That is, of course, France. The Mitterrand governments have with great energy escaped from the Gaullist cul-de-sac of the *Europe des patries* by proposing a new *patrie* which is Europe. They have used the disciplines of the Community to modernise and to rationalise (not their sheep farmers, to be sure).

They have at least begun to act seriously on the perception that European politics will increasingly be a game without frontiers. They will do so for a variety of motives, of course, of which nationalistic ones are not absent, but the perception now shapes policies and (since they constitute the government), action, especially on the industrial front.

Britain has many of the same imperatives as France; indeed, they are more imperative. The modernisation of the country is less advanced; the educational and skills levels are lower, as are living standards; public and private investment is less. It needs the European dynamic, and European discipline, rather more; and in its areas of competitive advantage – pre-eminently, financial services – it needs an open market in Europe in which to expand.

Modernisation within Europe means taking on the matter of sovereignty – perhaps the largest single reason why Labour has not attempted it. For under the rubric of 'parliamentary sovereignty' a can of very large worms is hidden.

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How do we translate into effective politics the reality that wider and deeper areas of our 'national' life are effectively predetermined by agencies, both public and private, in other nations – while 'our' agencies similarly intervene in the lives of other countries' citizens. We have done it in the past by treaty, agreements, markets, but it has long been true that the nature of transnational corporate power is at once so powerful and so elusive that it more and more demands a transnational democratic forum as a correlative and as a control. The thinness of the argument of the 'sovereign parliamentarians' lies in the nature of the ideal state to which they appeal. How could a parliament be reconstituted as truly sovereign, without coming to preside over a high-grade Albania?

The states of Europe have this opportunity. Because of their generally high level of economic activity, of culture and of co-operation, they can reasonably attempt to achieve a unique evolution from national to supranational government so that their citizens can enjoy both greater economic freedom and exercise more effective choice over how their lives are shaped. It is easy enough to recognise that the values of this project are those of the enlightenment – of human liberty and emancipation from impersonal forces.

Other social-democratic parties have seen in this the chance to pursue their traditional role – that of insisting that enlightenment values cannot be fully realised unless the rights they propose are supplemented by economic arrangements which bring citizens up to roughly common base-line. Labour has not seemed to. It is not that it is indifferent to these vistas in a European context, more that it has not cared to make them its own. It thus exists in a kind of limbo, poised between a British road to socialism which has been junked and a European version of social democracy which it has not yet really joined.

To 'accept that we are in Europe' – as was the Labour phrase for these past years – is nothing like enough. Being 'in Europe' presents Britain with a very long menu of change: in the economy, in the constitution, in culture. Yet so oppressive is the perception that no major party dares wake the slumbering patriots of our country. Just as we must continue to get *Land Of Hope And Glory* at the last night of the Proms, so we must not disturb or even seriously propose disturbance of the archaisms and eccentricities which obscure or devalue our rights and insult our intelligences. We must, in short, give license to a less restrained government than in most democracies for the sake of a tradition which is held to be an example of self-restraint.

To get from here to Europe is the largest political task of our age. We are still nation-states: as Ralf Dahrendorf has recently reminded us, it is still the nation-state which is the guarantor of rights. That being so, we should not be cavalier about its powers and its continued health. But we have the opportunity to create something higher.

'The electoral surge of eurosocialism has drawn Labour ever deeper into the social-democratic European home'

Not many politicians in Britain today speak against this kind of context. Michael Heseltine is one, and Edward Heath another. The man who would be leader; and the man who was, in one way, the most modern and visionary prime minister since the war. Who failed, certainly, but who had a view of Britain's place in the world and of the relationships within civil society – proposing a version of corporatism which, had the unions and capital been able to grasp it, might have established as solid a basis for a co-operative state as Germany has been able to do.

No Labour politician does so. Instead, Labour is simply part of the process we are undergoing: that is, of losing Britishness by stealth and acquiring an indefinable something else by default. While the Right can produce a gathering like the Bruges Group, within which ideas around the theme of sovereignty are put up and thrashed through, the Left has little but a kind of unexamined faith. If Labour is to make the last big step, it must be in this debate and shape it as well as be shaped by it. It owes it to itself, much more, it owes it to the country it claims to govern. Shorn of its socialism, it could offer us europeanism. But it must first know what it is doing.●

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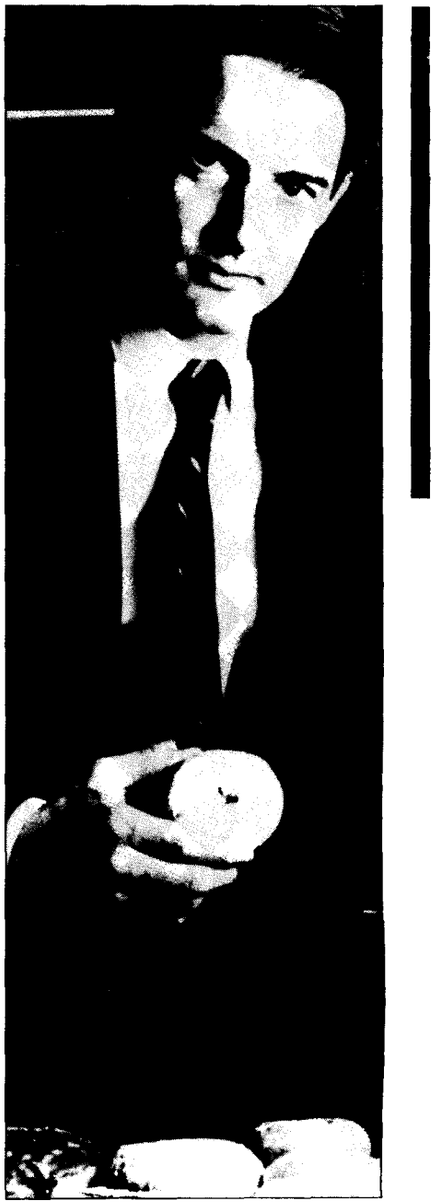
The Lynch Mob

David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* is about to hit British television. **Andy Medhurst** surveys the dizzy heights of Lynch's career



Ten years ago there was a cinema in Brighton that offered cheap matinees to students and pensioners. As you can imagine, it was difficult to find films that appealed to both audiences and this frequently led to some degree of disgruntlement in the stalls. Matters came to a head one afternoon when the film being screened was *Eraserhead*, and one of the pensioners was clearly not having a good time.

She shuffled in her seat, tut-tutted with increasing volume and began a running commentary outlining her distaste with all those images of gore and gloop. Eventually, it all got too much. She stood up, marched out to the aisle, and announced to the rest of us: 'If you're staying to watch the rest of this muck then you're as mad as the person who made it'. On reflection, I think it might have been one of the most perceptive pieces of film criticism I've ever heard.

That cinema is no longer there now, but a couple of miles away stands my local video hire shop. It shelves its stock according to the usual generic categories – horror, comedy, action – but it also boasts a section called, with disarming honesty, 'arty-farty films'. This is where you'll find the serious young people clustering, the devotees of *Diva*, the *Blade Runner* fans, and above all The Lynch Mob. More than any other film-maker currently working, David Lynch appeals to teenage intellectuals of all ages.

His career has been a textbook case of how to nurture and sustain cult status. *Eraserhead* established him, its landscape of industrial decay irrigated by indeterminate body fluids marking him out as the owner of a good-old-fashioned 'personal vision', an auteur of offal. Suspiciously, *The Elephant Man* was a commercial success, and worse still for his cultish champions had an accessible plot and genuinely moving performances. Happily *Dune* was a monstrous flop, and it could all be blamed on 'commercial interference', the grubby hands of the money-makers soiling Lynch's artistic integrity.

Then came *Blue Velvet*, a sour and perverse plunge into some of the darker facets of heterosexuality which generated such an excess of theoretical speculation that it virtually became an industry. *Not* to talk about it at dinner parties seemed like a shocking breach of etiquette. And now the Lynch machine is running at top speed once again, with the release of *Wild At Heart* and the British screening of his television serial *Twin Peaks*.

Great claims have been made for *Twin Peaks*. Its success in the United States has been credited with sparking off a new burst of creativity in American television. It is celebrated for proving that a mass audience can be attracted to watch something made with intelligence and flair. There is nothing wrong, of course, with intelligence and flair, but underlying the ballyhoo surrounding *Twin Peaks* are some of the oldest élitist cliches in the book. The praise it has received is at the expense of other kinds of television, the commonest version of this being that it has 'saved us from the likes of *Dallas*'. Behind that sort of comment is the implication that it has saved us from the kind of people who like *Dallas*. In other words, *Twin Peaks* is television for non-thickies.

But hang on, that can't be right, because it pulled in millions of thickies, even though it was scheduled in direct competition with top-of-the-ratings *Cheers*. While it would be nice to think that this heralded an overdue mass-realisation that *Cheers* is the most overrated series in the history of television, there has to be something more going on here. What was it in *Twin Peaks* that, no doubt to the chagrin of the hard-core Lynch Mob, had such wide appeal?

Twin Peaks begins with the discovery of a body. A girl who attended the local high school has been murdered, and not long afterwards one of her classmates is found barely alive, having been raped and assaulted. An FBI agent is brought in to further the investigation into these crimes, and as the search continues, the placid surface of the small town of *Twin Peaks* is peeled back to reveal a mess of rivalries, corruption, pornography and drugs.

The small-town setting and the serial format have led many to call *Twin Peaks* a soap, but it isn't. It certainly borrows from soap, as part of its ostentatiously well-read network of cultural references, but equally it gestures towards Westerns, road movies and Gothic horror.

Above all, though, it's a whodunnit, which, I think, accounts for its popular success. It plays on one of the most basic pleasures of narrative: the desire to find out, the need to know. It is undeniably gripping, trailing hints and clues and half-buried suggestions as to the perpetrator of the crimes and their precise nature. It's impossible to resist. Almost as addictive as *Miss Marple*.

Needless to say, with Lynch at the helm, it isn't that simple. The mystery of the central plot is shrouded in layer upon layer of disconcerting weirdness. Characters appear for fleeting moments, and you're never sure whether they'll turn out to be crucial to the plot, or as a kind of gag about our gullibility. The deranged woman with the eyepatch, forever complaining about her curtains, for example, or the psychotic trucker who checks the cigarette stubs in his wife's ashtray to see if she's having an affair, add to the general air of queasy menace that draws heavily on the same social and psychological

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Lynch Moments: (Clockwise from left) FBI Agent Dale Cooper in *Twin Peaks*, a breathless scene from *Blue Velvet*, cult vision of *Eraserhead* and Lula in *Wild At Heart*

milieu as *Blue Velvet*.

What sets *Twin Peaks* apart from the bulk of mainstream television is its tone. This is an unfashionable word in contemporary criticism and a difficult one to define, but its the only one that begins to convey the peculiar feel of the series. In a word, it disorientates, you never know which genre you're in or how you're supposed to respond. This is what gets The Lynch Mob really excited, what establishes their hero as one of the high priests of the (please stifle those yawns) postmodern. He does have a brilliant knack of wrong-footing audiences, playing games with their expectations. But is that enough? Shouldn't those games have more motivation than the adolescent wish to flaunt one's cleverness?

At one point in *Twin Peaks* the FBI agent and the local sheriff enter a sparse modern bank office, and there on the desk, bang up in the front of the frame, is a huge deer's head. The Lynch Mob begin to scribble notes about the surrealist power of this image, but then a bank employee gestures to the wall above the desk and says simply: 'It fell down'. Lynch wants to have his cake and eat it. He encourages us to concoct abstruse explanations of the films and then laughs at us for doing so. I find this intensely irritating, but if you're a worshipper at his shrine, it no doubt only fans the flames of your adoration. Oh goody, David's caught us out again!

At the core of *Twin Peaks*, and of Lynch's work as a whole, is an anxiety about emotion. It's as if expressing a direct feeling is a confession of intellectual weakness. We're all good postmoderns now, we all know that things are far too fragmented, too dissipated for us to believe in anything as embarrassingly whole as love or hate or fear or trust. The words alone are liable to bring on a giggle from the Lynch Mob, after all they only have one syllable, they don't need any footnotes.

This is another reason why it's mistaken to call *Twin Peaks* a soap, because soaps are our contemporary version of melodrama, and melodrama depends on the power and viability of those deep emotions. Melodrama makes you cry, *Twin Peaks* makes you snigger at the idea of crying. Melodrama is unambiguous, its characters say what they mean; *Twin Peaks* is cryptic and eliptical, a witty puzzle that keeps you hooked but never invites you to care.

Which is why I think the old woman in the Brighton cinema might have been on to something. She could perhaps have chosen her words more carefully, but I do find something disturbing about the generally uncritical response to Lynch. That the man knows what to do with a camera is beyond question, all of his films are full of images that stay burned into the mind however much one might want to dislodge them.

I'm thinking here of scenes like the one in *Blue Velvet* where Jeffrey is beaten up while Dean Stockwell, in smeared lipstick, sings a Roy Orbison song and one of the local girls dances abstractedly on top of the car. But talent can't be divorced from intention, and Lynch's intention is nothing more elevated than playing an elaborate game with his audience.

It's all very knowing and shrewd and skilfull, but it's hollow and empty and smug, like Hitchcock at his most arid. *Twin Peaks* is fun if you take it as an extended episode of *Murder She Wrote* with unusually lush visuals, but don't ask me to go along with the argument that it seethes with deeper meanings. In fact it's such a vacuous box of tricks that it could almost be directed by Peter Greenaway.●

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David Jackson has found a new image of masculinity

Falling Apart

I physically fell apart in February 1986. I lost control of my body for the first time in my life. I also became confused about who I thought I was. This confusion centred on the hidden history of denial that I had been carrying about in my body for so long. I couldn't sustain the old image of myself. The tension between the power I felt in the world of work and a constant sense of precariousness in my emotional life finally came to a head.

Gradually, over the space of six years, my whole life changed. I gave up my job as head of English in a comprehensive school and refused the invitation to become a senior teacher. A long-term relationship broke up and then gradually repaired itself. I moved house three times and underwent major heart surgery. I was in hospital for 16 weeks. These disjunctures were interrelated and incredibly painful.

Physical breakdown is a terrifying experience for many men because it connects the masculine body with weakness, dependency and passivity, all the supposedly 'feminine' qualities they have spent a lifetime defining and defending themselves against. Often for the first time in some men's lives it opens up fearful cracks in the 'hard case' front of heterosexual masculinity.

What I learned from the experience was that I couldn't go on imposing my conscious will on my feelings and bodily experience, and that I had to learn, however painfully, how to bring my feelings and head together. I slowly learned to stop pushing myself relentlessly towards performance targets and deadlines.

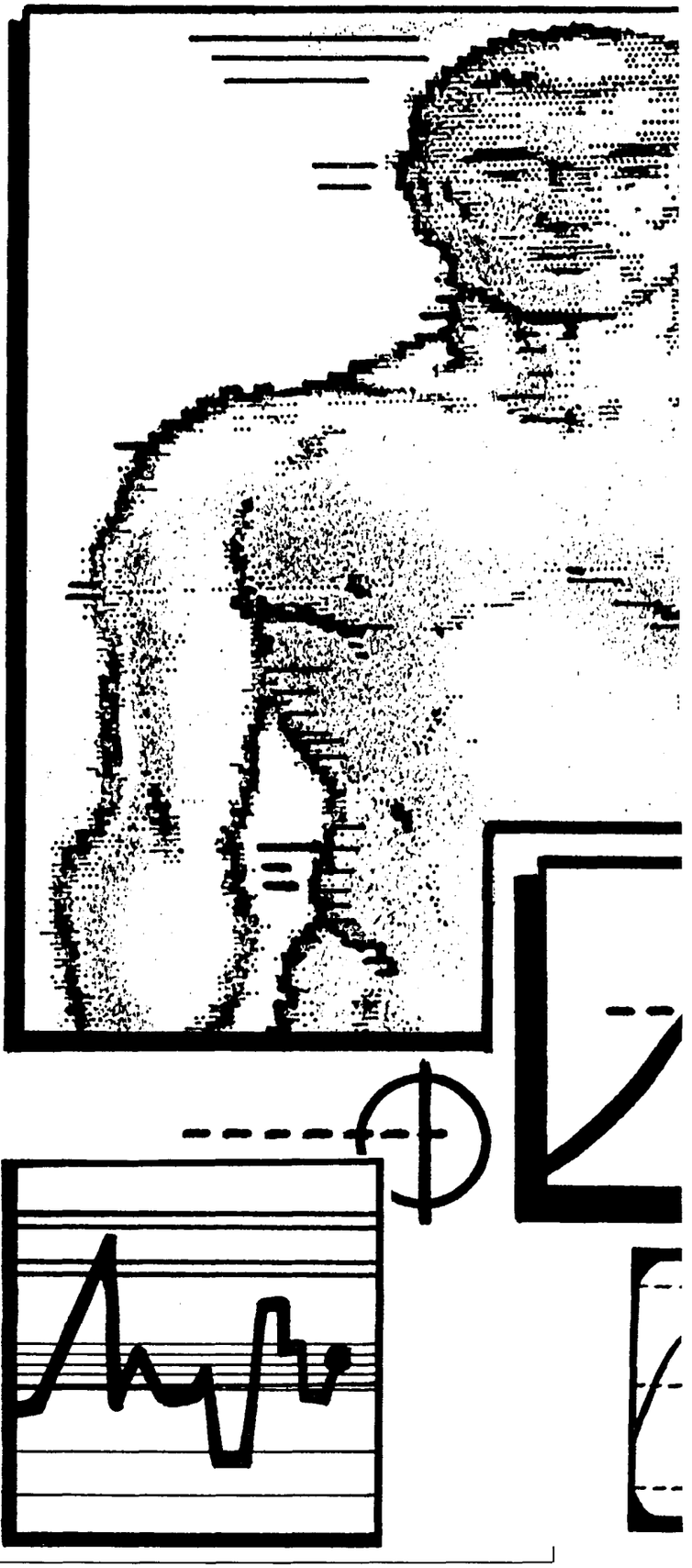
Alongside that, and more difficult to admit, came a dawning recognition of how much I had leaned on, used and been serviced by women. The contradiction between my speaking evangelically at conferences about 'quality of feeling' and then allowing myself to drift into the occasional casual conference affair, the mixture of feeling temporarily high with intense distress afterwards, finally cracked right across my old self-image.

My ability to give an obsessive, driving, physical energy to my work was dependent on being looked after at home. My first wife gave me unpaid, invisible support and servicing that allowed me to keep going at a frenzied pace in the public sphere. Compulsive activity at work seemed to offer a controlling sense of purpose and direction when other parts of my life were breaking apart. My body was susceptible to accepting its appropriate place in a gendered organisation of labour.

My relationship with my body had shifted through time. The first 20 years of my life were spent trying and often failing to embody a he-man masculine identity, mainly through sporting, family and sexual relations and the regulatory framework of schooling. Learning that you were naturally entitled to social, legal and financial power over women was translated into learning to hold power in your body – tautening your muscles, holding yourself upright, striding with a cocky strut, throwing out your chest and walking from the shoulders. All of this, however inconsistently, has left its mark on me.

But after the age of 20 and years of academic achievement at university, I started to identify myself through my mind. That was also tied in to my daily working relations as a teacher and beginning to see myself as a hero-innovator through my intellectual achievements. I have often disregarded the needs of my body to fit into the goals and deadlines of work. In this way I've approached my body as a mechanical container that carries out the pressing instruction from my head.

But sometimes I dream in slow motion of having a seal's body, sensing the way a seal can become a part of its liquid element. I am full of frustrated desire for the way it delights in the casual play of its own sleek movement. All very different from the gripped pressure that was my masculine body a few years ago. This



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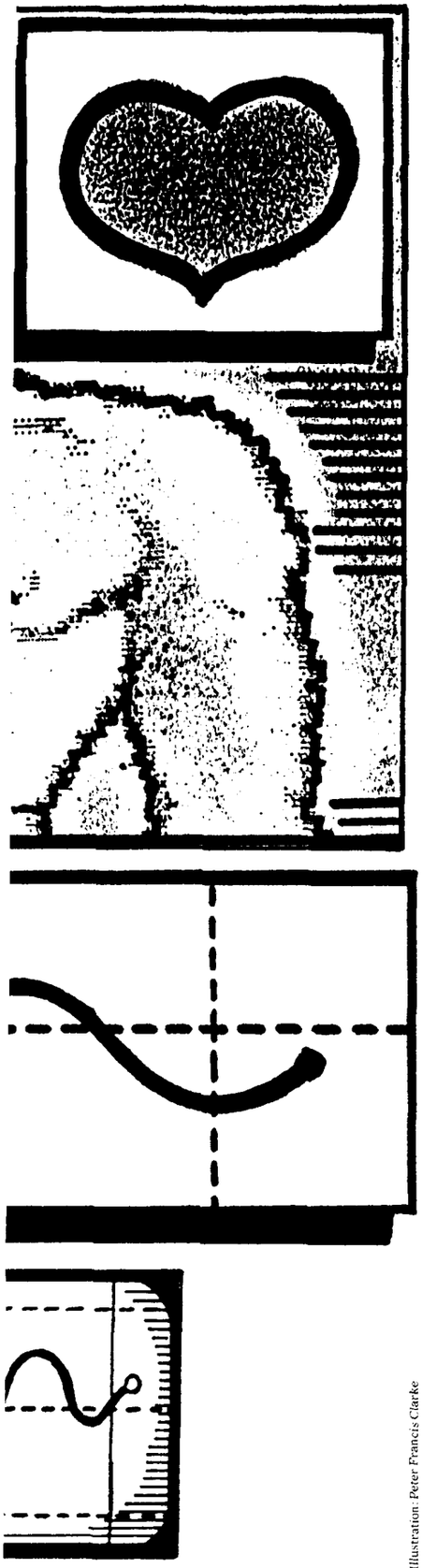

Illustration: Peter Francis Clarke

clenched teeth, tightening of muscles and nerves to realise the chequered flag fantasies of achievement that I strained towards is something I lived with every day.

After the age of 30, as my marriage broke up, I was seized by a buried grief that probably reactivated some of the loss and grief I had experienced in my early childhood. Unable to deal with this pain, I started to seek refuge in a workaholic obsessiveness. A massive emotional investment in the work identity of an intellectual helped to fill up the wounding gaps in my life left by the loss of my children and the loss of another family home. As the years went by, I learned to avoid my pain and distress by a single-minded concentration on intellectual work. In this way, my sense of self as a worker gave me the stability and reassurance I needed at a time of shocking disorientation. However illusory this fixed self was, it gave me an anchoring point in the shifting sands of my life.

A widening split grew between my mind and my body. My body carried around my brain but was estranged from its specific needs and rhythms. Over the years this led to a general denial of my emotional life and bodily experience as I pressured myself to meet goals and targets. That's why, when I eventually collapsed, it was with a sense that my body had decided to claim its revenge on an indifferent and arrogant intellect.

When I collapsed in total heart-block, I was forcefully reconnected to the life and history of my body. It was the point at which my body refused to go on obeying the imperious demands of my head. Having raced up the stairs leading to the English department, I suddenly became dizzy and light-headed. I was sucked into the darkening, spinning centre of a whirlpool. I couldn't stop myself from being swallowed deeper and deeper. I was caving in and falling.

I had wet myself, gashed my chin open on the floor and been unconscious for a full eight minutes. The overwhelming panic of losing control of my body possessed me. It was the shocking reversal of usual expectations. My masculinised body was so used to controlling itself and others that it flipped when it felt it was being controlled by forces outside itself.

I was rushed by ambulance to the coronary care unit. The panic stayed with me for the next six days in there. Was I going to die like some of the patients who occupied neighbouring beds? Wild alarm bells rang in my head. I obsessively watched a heart monitor register each flickering irregularity in my heartbeat and noticed how my peaks of anxiety agitated the monitoring screen.

Lying in bed all day, I became intensely aware of my body's moods, its sudden swings, its aches and pains, my distinctive heartbeat, in a way that my rational intellect had previously distanced me from. They ran a long series of ultra-sound tests on my heart. The machine imaged an internal picture of my faulty, leaking valve. The magnified slurping and slushing sound of my blood echoed in my ears and filled me with terror. The exact causes of my illness were a mystery. My consultant said that I needed a closer, internal examination.

After so many years of bodily invisibility, this period felt like a time of alien invasion, of having my body colonised by machines that penetrated far inside me. My fear of losing control and being de-armoured was acute. I had learned to be the penetrator and the fucker. Now they were fucking me. My purchase on a safe, fixed heterosexual masculine identity was being eroded. In my mind, my body broke up into little bits.

My consultant recommended that they should operate on my damaged heart valve. I reluctantly agreed. The preparation for the operation forced my body into a starkly naked exposure. They shaved off the body hair from my chest, armpits and lower stomach and the all my pubic hair as well. The protective shield of my masculinised body was smashed into and broken open. My chest was physically unzipped, my sternum broken and my heart repaired and reconstructed. I awoke with a new plastic valve busily and strangely clicking away inside me.

I fell apart emotionally after the operation. This was the bottom for me. I was surrounded by men waiting for operations who were trying to control their mounting panic by putting on brave faces. At the lowest point of my depression I cracked up. I started to cry. At first in apologetic, strangled sobs but then wildly, uncontrollably. I still don't know exactly what I was crying for but the slightest thing would set me off. I seemed to be open and vulnerable in a way that I had never experienced before. A great dam was cracking open in me after all those years of holding myself tight. All that stiff-upper-lip stoicism and self-control started to fissure. It was this crying that seemed to point the way towards another way of being.

My bodily crack-up provoked me to take on a critical reassessment of my traditional masculine identity. My body reasserted its claims for a fuller representation of my existence by disrupting the illusion of my coherent, unified, rational intellect and shredding it into small fragments. This shocking invasion blew up the fantasy dream of 'he-man', masculine power. It forced the state of my damaged body into critical visibility. Without creating another fantasy of total, harmonious reintegration between my mind and my body, it showed me why it was necessary, while living within the fragments, to bring my bodily experience and my emotions into closer contact with my intellect. Before the 25 weeks of my breakdown were up, I knew that I had to give up my ambiguous attempts to achieve a 'he-man' identity before it finally did for me.●

David Jackson's book, *Unmasking Masculinity* (Unwin Hyman) is published this month.

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Nancy Jachec examines Richard Long's art

Romancing The Stone

The three sculptures by Richard Long currently showing at the Tate Gallery present us with a somewhat limited view of his work. Purpose-built for the space, they are available for the spectator as more or less traditional sculptural objects. This detracts from the nuances of time, location and impermanence which distinguish his landscape pieces. But certain themes do unite his indoor and outdoor works, particularly that of the meeting between nature and humanity and the result of that encounter.

Long was awarded the Turner Prize for the exceptional and enduring quality of his contribution to British art in 1989. In 1980, he described his work as being: 'real, not illusory or conceptual. It is about real stones, real time, real actions. My work is not urban, nor is it romantic. It is the laying down of modern ideas in the only practical places to take them. The natural world sustains the industrial world. I use the world as I find it.'

Long's career in the years since he left St Martin's School of Art in 1968, can be seen as an effort by various means to clarify this encounter. Some of his works from the late 60s attempt to marry elements from conceptual sculpture with the landscape. *England 1967* presents, within a photograph, a view of the landscape in which rests a plywood circle. A vertical black frame in the foreground directs our gaze. During this period, he was also exploring less intrusive ways of interacting with the natural world, cutting shapes in the earth and replacing the grass, or simply treading lines in it.

It is the idea behind these works that came to characterise Long's *oeuvre*, which incorporates for the first time within the domain of sculpture, the integration of location, motion, time and history. His use of the photograph to reinforce both the absence of the work in time and space, and its presence within history, can be seen as a liberation for this medium in respect to time, as the cubist construction was from the modelled form in terms of space.

The manner in which Long constructs his sculptures always works within this idea of the human construction existing as part of a larger history. Because he draws upon materials indigenous to the area in which he is working, sympathy is established between the object and the environment, which is absent in his early works.

His use of geometric form plays upon this point of contact between the natural and human worlds. Although Long rather ambiguously accounts for his use of geometric figures 'because they do the job', the fact that they are composed of natural materials – stones, sticks or the earth itself – they still come to 'embrace the man-made as itself a manifestation of nature', as one critic put it.

This art becomes an alternative to 'a modern sense of alienation' imposed by industrialisation, with naturalised geometry mediating between nature and civilisation, allowing humanity to slip into rather than to dominate nature. The impermanence of these works further reinforces the idea of the human construction as part of a larger natural process.

Long's installations manage to retain some of the resonance of his monumental outdoor works. Carefully arranged on the gallery floor, his stone circles appear nearly as transient as those in the Texas wilderness. Because the fragments of stone are merely placed, not anchored, the pieces do have a sense of ongoing action, of a job not finished.

Despite these parallels, however, the installations are qualitatively different. They have been interpreted as refined versions of the outdoor 'experiences', a physical embodiment of past action. Yet I wonder if, for all their difference in appearance and location, they are not simply a demonstration of Long's statement in 1983, that there is a certain sameness or universality in this experience: 'Stones are stones.'●

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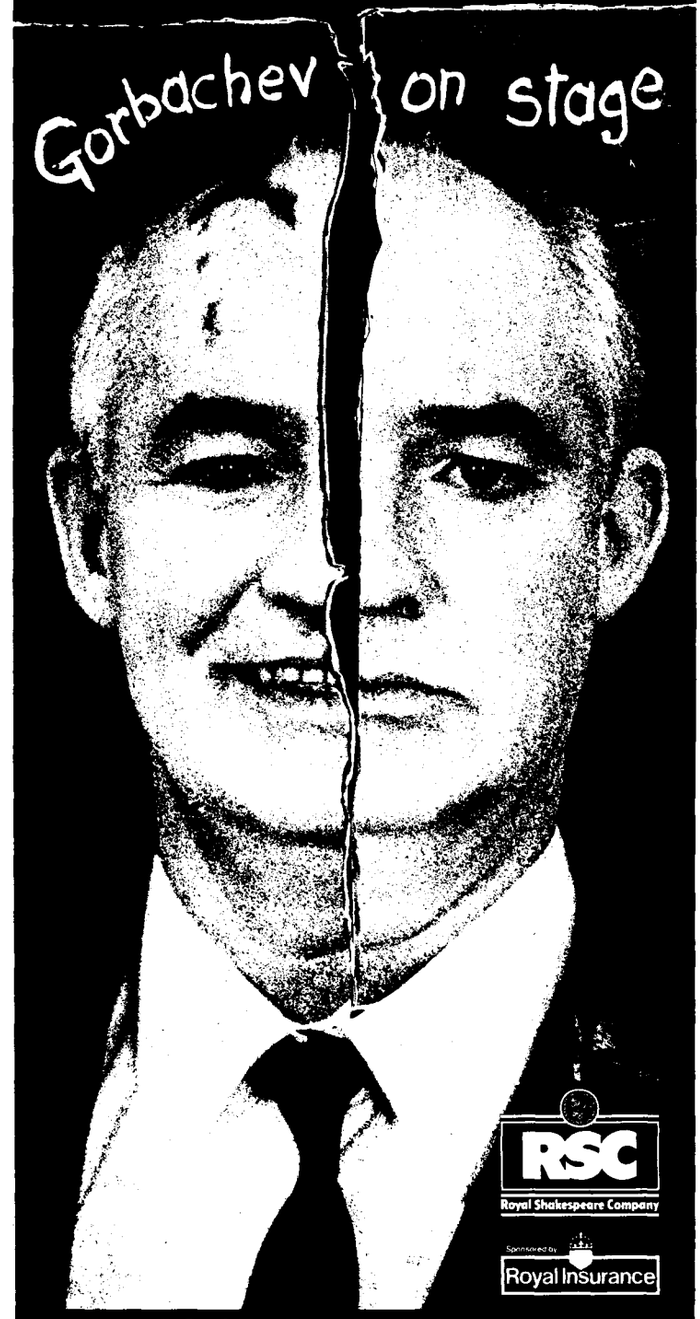

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James Runcie teaches Neil Kinnock a lesson

Words And Vision

The Labour Party has a media problem – still. Despite the glitzy party political broadcasts, the new-look policy review and an improved performance by the shadow cabinet, there is still the feeling that its new-found communication skills are superficial.

This may be because issues like poverty, injustice, the crisis in teaching and the future of the NHS cannot be dressed up in an expensively produced policy document without seeming extravagant. The Labour Party, like charities, cannot present social issues so slickly that it seems to profit from the injustice it is seeking to overcome.

But the problem has really been caused because the party has been dangerously sidetracked by concentrating on its presentation and identity rather than its argument and vision. Even though St Augustine referred to rhet-oric as 'so much wind and smoke', it remains the key area in which Labour must excel. We cannot 'catch the vision' if we don't know what it is.

The preoccupation with the visual image of the party is a typical product of the end of the second great age of literacy. The first age lasted from the dissemination of Homer until the collapse of the Roman Empire. The second age has lasted from Caxton and the invention of printing until the present. Today, image does seem increasingly more important than text. Egyptian pictographic communication and Gothic imagery have now found modern equivalents. Stained glass windows have become the still-frames of television, fresco has become film.

We are now in a post-literate culture. The vocabulary with which we communicate is limited and diminishing. Despite the advent of new words like 'abzyme', 'earcon' and 'plugumentary', and new uses (the noun 'handbag' becoming a verb, as in the phrase 'Mrs Thatcher handbagged Delors') average vocabulary is a mere 3,000 words (an eighth of Shakespeare's). Such a reduction in linguistic awareness is ultimately inseparable from a reduction in usage. When a word becomes arcane, the concept it was used to express may well disappear.

In his novel *Love And Garbage*, the Czech writer Ivan Klima envisages a world in which political debate will be conducted entirely in 'jerkish', a language of 225 words developed in Atlanta for mutual communication between humans and chimpanzees. 'At last a language had been found in which the spirit of our age could speak, and because that language would spread rapidly from pole to pole, to the east and to the west, it would be the language of the future.' This language of 225 words is closer than we might like to think – for the vocabulary used by the tabloid press averages 500 words.

Such linguistic diminution has a critical effect on political debate. If the words aren't there, how can ideas be expressed? In a culture where both speaker and audience are no longer trained in the techniques of classical debate, and in a secular age where the language of the King James Bible no longer influences the rhythms of our prose, the predominant tenor of British public debate consists of little more than facetiousness, insult and a spurious use of statistics.

Despite restrictions on 'unparliamentary language', the style of argument in the House of Commons can be summarised as little more than 'Ya! Boo!' politics. It has lost its rhetorical credibility. Prime Minister's Question Time is now so orchestrated as to resemble a well-rehearsed courtroom drama.

Outside the House of Commons, few politicians seem capable of developing sustained, varied and complex argument. There has been a collapse of rhetoric, and the possibility of sophisticated discussion seems increasingly remote. The Ciceronian principle of structuring a speech in terms of introduction, narration, confirmation, refutation and peroration has been lost, and the more complex stylistic manoeuvres have long been forgotten.

Knowledge of the technical terms may not be essential, but an awareness of the techniques rhetoric can offer gives the thinker access to a whole range of linguistic devices and a means of escaping the limited range of contemporary debate. The paradox of the post-literate culture is that there is now an extraordinary opportunity to reclaim language, to make a speech stand out against the glut of random images that surround it. Rhetoric now offers a cultural contrast.

This presents a challenge and an opportunity for the Left that has so far remained unexploited. Even though Neil Kinnock has frequently been accused of being a 'mere rhetorician', this is to misunderstand the nature of rhetoric. Despite his good oratorical manner, and his delight in language, he still lacks the classical attributes of statistical exempla, concession, courtesy and careful choice of theme.

His speeches contain many of his favourite rhetorical devices: repetition ('We meet in this conference in a spirit of progress. In a spirit of confidence.'); alliteration ('candour and confidence', 'practical policies'); anaphora ('They told us in Pontypridd... They told us in Vauxhall... They told us in the county council elections... '); and his most favoured device of all, parison, the taking of three similar phrases and

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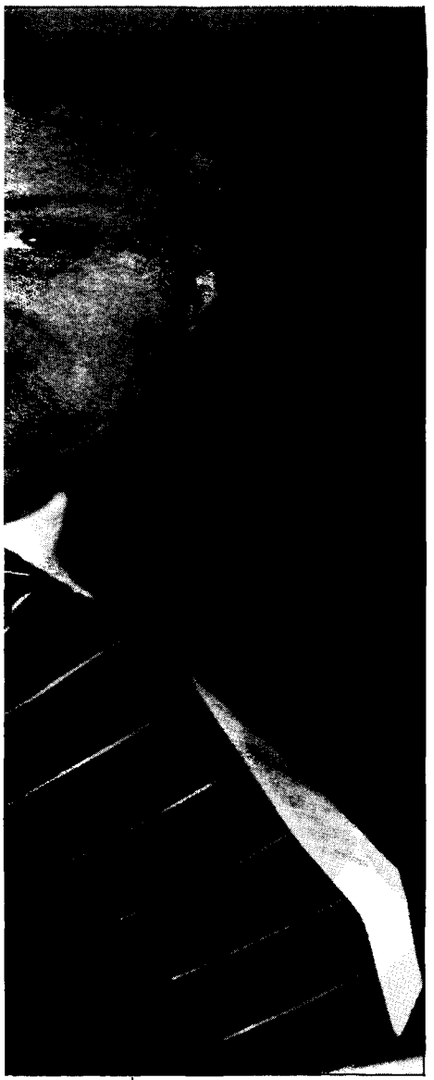

using them to describe Mrs Thatcher ('out of touch, out of date and out of step').

But the speeches might be more successful if he spent less time on refutation, his attack on the Tories. In Brighton last year, this took up 50% of his speech, whereas less than 15% of Mrs Thatcher's Blackpool speech was directed at Labour. In classical terms, this can be seen as a rhetorical mistake, as it gave Kinnock less time in which he could address the major issues. The future of the NHS and the crisis in teaching, two key areas of potential Labour strength, were absent.

Labour's central rhetorical problem lies in the failure to claim the main themes as its own, its reluctance to challenge statistics and in its over-use of refutation. Attack is a technique best used sparingly, since its frequent repetition leads to a monotony that takes the focus and the attention away from the speaker. An insult always works far better after a compliment.

By studying classical rhetoric, it is possible to develop a more authoritative political style. Contradiction and hyperbole are insufficient. What is needed is intellectual rigour, evolutionary argument and poetic imagination. Only then can Labour dictate the agenda. One has only to look at the rhetorical maturity of Havel's New Year's Day message in Czechoslovakia to appreciate the kind of approach that is needed. For Havel, 'Politics does not have to be the art of the possible... it can also be the art of the impossible, that is, the art of making both ourselves and the world better'. This from a country where Klima's jerkish was formerly pre-eminent. Now a new political language has been born.

The same linguistic opportunity faces the Left in Britain, a culture where the tenor of political debate has been cheapened and diminished. The Labour Party does have the people to carry it off. Kinnock, Smith, Brown, Gould and Blair can all turn it on if they want to. But they are going to have to work far harder, finding a disciplined, structured rehtoric, if they are to win their case.

Advertising and presentation are deceptively seductive. Although the Labour Party has shown an increasingly sophisticted use of the media tools on offer, its main task, of which it must not lose sight, is to develop a more authoritative style of argument.

Forget intertextuality and postmodernism. Now is the time for a new classicism, in which clarity of thought, courtesy of expression and accuracy of example contribute to a structure of political argument, ensuring that the wit of persuasion, acting in sharp contrast to the post-literate culture, may yet win the day.●

Dave Hill on Gazza stardust

Global Hero

The price of Paul Gascoigne has gone up. This is not a reference to transfer fees but to interview fees. Before the World Cup, an audience with Gazza for a posh newspaper – *The Independent On Sunday* – would have knocked them back £100. 'It's just a token fee,' protested his advisor, 'after all, it's two hours of his time.'

Since the World Cup, old Daft-As-A-Brush has been canvassed for a natter with the snazzy men's magazine, *GQ*. They were met with a request for five grand. No deal both times, as it happens, in the first case as a matter of principle, in the second on the grounds of hard economics. But it just goes to show that there's gold in celebrity teardrops, and Gascoigne shed his with the kind of timing that makes marketing men turn green.

The ingredients of this stardom are enlightening. One of them is obvious. As the nation steadily succumbed to the lure of Italia 90, a footballing drama – all arcane terminology and experts – became a human drama with real-life personalities to the fore. When he was booked by the referee against West Germany, ensuring his non-appearance in the Final if England had qualified, Gascoigne strode, weeping, on to centre stage.

But there is a subtler twist to all this. By letting his feelings show in such a public place, Gascoigne, already a demonstrative performer, exposed some distinctly unofficial English masculine characteristics. Bulldogs show no weakness – only little puppy dogs cry. But Gascoigne is very like a little boy, his belly jutting like a toddler's, his blue shorts hoiked up high, worn like a nappy or the bottom half of an infant's sailor suit.

That look of guileless innocence, which beams, too, from his chubby, gummy face, also underlies a kind of nostalgia that Gascoigne inspires. With his unleavened Geordie accent and his Jarrow March coiffure, he hints at a throwback to English football's 'Golden Age' (roughly the 30s to the 50s) when to be the People's Choice meant you were spontaneous and free, a 'working-class wizard', not dull and regimented like the Ruskies or the Krauts. All this was changing by the 60s, and today's players are coached and refined, their talents bedded into systems and strategies. Gascoigne, by contrast, seems gloriously uncontrolled.

But this is just one part of the story of Gazzamania. It is important to realise that, to a degree, it has all been a wonderful mistake. Outgoing England manager, Bobby Robson, leaned towards steadier types.

Action Images

He might not even have picked our Gazza but for injuries and public demand. There is also an element of illusion at work. Gascoigne comes from the traditionally poor northeast, but he forsook Newcastle United for Tottenham Hotspur, plc.

He sometimes plays like the perennial show-off on the local rec, but he is – has to be – a sophisticated athlete. And now (like all big-name footballers) he won't talk to his adoring public through the press without a contract and a cheque in the post. What it all adds up to is a definitive English phenomenon of modern times: a one-man mass media product trading on an echo from the past.●

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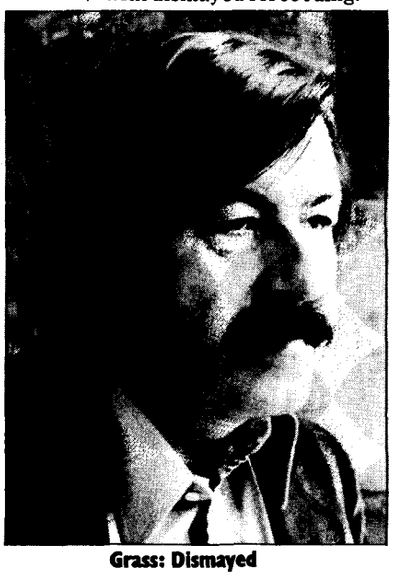
BOOKS

Allan Massie reflects on German unity

The New Reich

'Events,' Bismarck used to say, 'are stronger than the plans of men.' They also move faster than publishers. Consequently, the arguments which Günter Grass advances in **Two States – One Nation? The Case Against German Reunification** (*Secker & Warburg, pbk £5.99*) already belong to a lost cause. By the time his book appears in our bookshops, the thing will have happened. The East German state which he would have preserved will have been swallowed up. Germany will again be *Ein Volk, Ein Reich*, a prospect that fills him, as a German patriot, with dismayed foreboding.



Grass: Dismayed

He knew of course, at the time of writing the most recent essay in this book (which essay is actually placed first), that this would happen. 'Eventually we will once more – following the German fairy-tale tradition – come to be feared and isolated.' Let us hope, if this is true, that this time, at least, history does actually repeat itself as farce, rather than tragedy.

Grass's opposition to unity is based not only on his fear of the German fairy-tale, but, even more strongly perhaps, in his dislike and disapproval of the Federal Republic as it actually is. He sees it as a state built on a lie – Adenauer's promise to the displaced German of the lost eastern provinces (of whom Grass himself, as a native of Danzig-Gdansk is actually one) that, some day, they would return to their homes – and maintained by a delusion: that the capitalist economy which functions so fluidly and successfully there can actually satisfy all the aspirations of its citizens, offering them the plenitude of experience. But to maintain such a delusion requires more lies and a degree of smooth, and as far as possible invisible, repression.

Now his idea that a purified east Germany, linked to the West in a confederation, could have supplied a counterweight, may itself be a delusion; but it was not an ignoble hope. The weakness of his argument is rather his failure to define what he means by the culture which he advances as a satisfactory substitute for political unification. Culture is a term freely employed by many who, with reason, distrust the modern bureaucratic state and loathe its manifestations, but it is unfortunately a word which is as vague, unsatisfactory and therefore generally useless as 'freedom'. Grass's opponents are entitled to ask him just what he understands by culture, but though the word is employed several score of times in these essays, he never commits himself to a definition.

And yet this collection of essays, dialogues, speeches, stretching back more than 20 years, does something more than testify to his decency and consistency. Taken in conjunction with Hans Magnus Enzensberger's **Political Crumbs** (*Verso, hbk £32.95, pbk £10.95*), another compilation of the same sort, it may direct the argument towards the next necessary stage. This must logically be the nature of European unity. We, the other nations of Europe, have been sold this principally as the means of corralling the Germans. Grass makes it clear that he thinks such restraint necessary; consequently, his attitude to European unification seems as naive and uncritical as his attitude to German unification is intelligent and disturbing.

This is very strange. Enzensberger's analysis of the nature of the Federal Republic, from which Grass would not dissent, makes it still more disturbing.

Enzensberger identifies two systems of repression in the Federal Republic. Its first has been inherited: 'Its political basis was the authoritarian state; its equivalent in terms of foreign policy imperialist expansion by military means'. He says, probably rightly, that 'this is a legacy that no one is likely to envy us', though I suggest that 'few' would be more accurate than 'no one'.

'The second system of surveillance and repression is a genuine product of the second world war... Its domestic political basis is the integration of the working class by means of mass consumption and the welfare state; its foreign political equivalent is the offensive of the German export economy in the world market ... The more progressive experts in control and repression... are by type technocrats... (Their) 'power does not come from the barrel of a gun but from the software of the computer... .'

Now much of what Enzensberger has to say of the Federal Republic could be applied with equal justice to Britain, France, Italy, probably also the smaller states of Europe. In all the states of western Europe, the last decades have seen a weakening of the parliamentary process and a strengthening of the administrative organs of government. The complexities of the modern state seems to justify it; the technocrat gets things done. He possesses the information and the capability. And of course he is benevolent; he has the best interests of everyone at heart, hasn't he? And how else could it be done?

Both Right and Left have gone along with this, even though one strand of the Right has its roots in distrust of the state, and one strand of the Left in distrust of authority. But the logic of the mod-ern international economy seems inexorable; consequently we see everywhere power transferred from parliaments to ministries.

The Delors Europe will carry the process further. To bridle the nation-states, it will transfer still more power from elected representatives to permanent officials. To 'maintain level playing-fields' – a grotesque phrase – it will fortify the technocrats. It will promote the culture so admired by Günter Grass in order to control it, to make it socially useful.

The Delors Europe will become federal Republic writ larger. There will be a new Reich; it will not even necessarily be run by Germans,

Enzensberger: Disturbing

because it will have incorporated everything that is strongest and worst in the German tradition. Moreover it will be the neutral corollary of the whole tendency of the modern state.

It is rather a nightmare. Can it be prevented? Günter Grass saw the only hope for Germany in confederation, not unity. Isn't that even more true of Europe? Isn't the best hope for Europe one in which power is retained, or rather held, at the level of provinces and small nation-states, and in which only conditional powers are delegated to any central authority? But isn't such a confederation as sadly unlikely as that Germany would have resisted the temptation of unification?●

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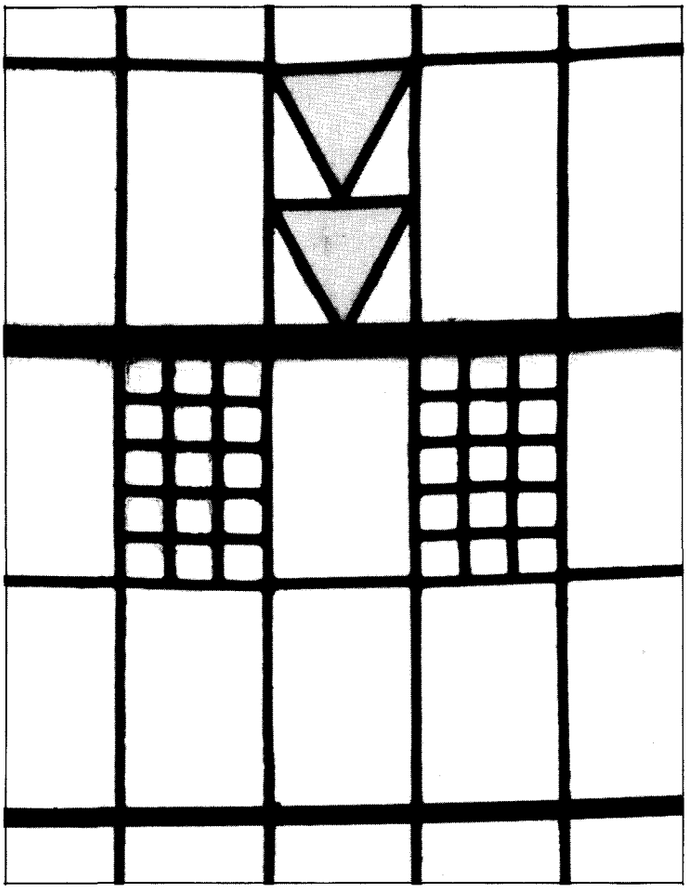
Cairns Craig on Scottish Book Fortnight

National Neurosis



Scottish culture has been caught for many years in a destructive double bind. From the metropolitan perspective, Scotland is provincial – its arts can only be an after-echo of more 'mature' and advanced culture of the centre. So much is true of any peripheral culture. But within Scotland itself many Scots, over the past 30 years, found their own culture regressive and unacceptable. Tom Nairn has long modified some of the views of his early essays, but for many on the left, his description of Scottish culture has become the standard interpretation.

It goes like this, Scotland did not develop a nationalist consciousness in the 19th century because its bourgeoisie found their economic interests served by attaching themselves to English economic expansion. Thus, Scotland became a 'freak by-product of European history' emptied of high culture and taken over by an insanely sturdy sub-culture; which will not wither away, if only because it possesses the force of its own vulgarity – immunity from doubt and higher culture.

Within this scenario, Scottish culture is endlessly self-defeating. If it strives for a national high-culture it must fail, because its economic development does not demand that the 'real' problems of the age should be posed in specifically Scottish terms. But if it accepts the images generated from its sub-culture, it is trapped in a discourse which is 'revolving in timeless circles', and which implies a neurotic deformation in the national psyche that accords with its most potent self-image – Jekyll and Hyde.

For the generation of Scots intellectuals who grew up though the 50s and 60s socialism provided the 'real' identity of the Scottish people. An assertion of a justifiable Scottishness because it could claim to be international. This international, socialist Scottish culture had its heroes in Maclean and MacDiarmid, rallying posts for an identity shorn of all the timeless vulgarity of ordinary Scottishness.

But these acts of remythologising were undertaken without any significant effort to investigate the realities of Scottish cultural tradition. Conducted largely by writers, this movement ignored cultural production that was not verbal, and even in literature, awareness of what had happened or what was happening in Scottish writing was extremely limited – and for a simple reason: the texts were not available.

The 'vacuum' of Scotland's high culture was, in effect, an evacuation of the resources to maintain the evidence in existence. Scotland had been a great centre of publishing since the 18th century (*Edinburgh Review*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, Chambers and Collins), but the power of the London literary market place had gradually undermined its autonomous development, so that by the 1930s, the Scottish publishing industry had retreated into specialist niches. As a result, it became more and more difficult for Scottish writers to publish their work unless it was geared to, and accepted by, major London houses with their essentially English markets.

Two examples: Neil Gunn, Scotland's major novelist of the first half of the 20th century, published by a company called Porpoise Press that was taken over by Faber, and while Faber continued to publish Gunn it became less and less enthusiastic about styles not designed to sell to a general market until, in the early 1950s, Gunn stopped writing. Second, George Friel, probably Scotland's most underrated 20th-century novelist, whose life was one of continual frustration in finding publishers for novels about Glasgow working-class life.

Today the situation is very different. For the past 10 years it has been de rigueur for every London publisher to have a Scottish name on their list. After Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*, Scottish writers were important properties, and James Kelman's recent nomination for the Booker has only added to that 'we mustn't be left out' syndrome. But this sort of representation in English markets goes little way towards re-establishing the identity and distinctiveness of a separate cultural tradition.

In cultural terms, one of the most significant facts about Scottish culture of the 20th Century is that its centre of gravity is the working class. Scottish writing – in part because of the vitality of the folk tradition, in part because of the identification of authentic Scottish speech with working-class speech (the middle classes are anglicised), in part because of an educational system that encouraged the development of talented working-class children – takes working-class experience as the centre from which it has to reach out, not as a margin it has to reach out to. This may not be unique in the West, but it is certainly unusual. Here the Scottish and English traditions are absolutely at odds: in English writing, the 'working-class novel' is a marginal genre.

Both Gray and Kelman, and many others like Brian McCabe, Kenneth White, Christopher Rush, Sian Hayton, not to mention naturalised Scot Charles Palliser, found their initial outlet through Scotland's revitalised small publishers. Without a Scottish publishing industry Scottish writers cannot depend upon support. Fashion in London will alter, the economic climate will change, and suddenly Scottish writers will be struggling to find publication.

The Scottish Book Fortnight, which starts on October 20, is more than just a PR exercise. It is essential for small cultures to have their own publishing industry and for those publishers to be able to market their writers to the widest possible audience. Canongate, Mainstream, Polygon, the university presses and Richard Drew have not only made possible the great creative

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surge of Scottish culture in the past 20 years, they have also made it possible to begin to reconstruct the reality behind the supposed emptiness of earlier Scottish culture.

Writers like Robin Jenkins, one of the major voices of modern Scottish novel writing, now have novels available again – *The Changeling* (Canongate), *Guests Of War* (Scottish Academic Press), *Dust On Paw* – that have not been available for years. Others of the same period include Alan Sharp and Archie Hind. But perhaps most significantly of all, is the republication of many novels by women Scottish writers – Willa Muir (wife of Edwin, and the one who really did the translation of Kafka et al), Nan Shepard, Catherine Carswell (all Canongate), the Findlater sisters (Virago), Naomi Mitchison (Richard Drew and Virago), are writers who provide a very different conception of Scotland from the male emphases usually associated with Scottish writing.

The publishers, with some help from the Arts Council and the academics, have filled the empty places of the Scottish past and made it impossible to claim, whatever the merits of individual artists, that Scotland was a neurosis where high culture was impossible.●

Bob Rowthorn on a dearth of innovation

Wealth Of Nations

The Competitive Advantage Of Nations (*MacMillan, £25*) is a sprawling work which few will wish to read from cover to cover. But despite its length (more than 600 pages of text, together with 200 pages of charts, tables and appendices) it is extremely interesting. Michael Porter provides a stimulating analysis of international competition and economic growth. He is primarily concerned with capitalist economies, but many of his arguments are directly relevant to socialist economies and to current problems in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Porter's starting point is the observation that no country can be competitive in everything. Strength in some areas implies weakness in others. A successful country is not one which succeeds across the board, but which has a sufficient number of internationally competitive industries to finance the economic and social aspirations of its population.

The main aim of the book is to identify factors which determine the 'competitive advantage' of a nation in a given industry, and to show how these factors work together as a system. A crucial factor is the phenomenon of 'clustering', in which related groups of successful firms and industries emerge in one nation to gain leading position in the world market. Porter gives copious examples to illustrate the importance of this phenomenon, including detailed case studies of the UK and seven other national economies.

Porter divides capitalist development into four stages: factor cost driven, investment driven, innovation driven and wealth driven. These first three stages represent a movement towards progressively more advanced types of production. The final wealth driven stage, however, is one of actual or incipient decline in which the basic dynamism is lost, since the driving force is no longer the creation of new wealth but the administration of existing wealth.

In this final stage, the needs of industry become subordinate to the needs of finance. Financial speculation and the pursuit of short-term gain inhibit long-term investment, while the control of industry falls increasingly into the hands of lawyers and accountants, in place of engineers and other technical experts.

The educational system also fails to provide the work force with the kind of skills required in the truly dynamic economy. Because of these, and various other negative features, a country that has reached the wealth driven stage of development gradually loses the capacity to innovate and compete in world markets.

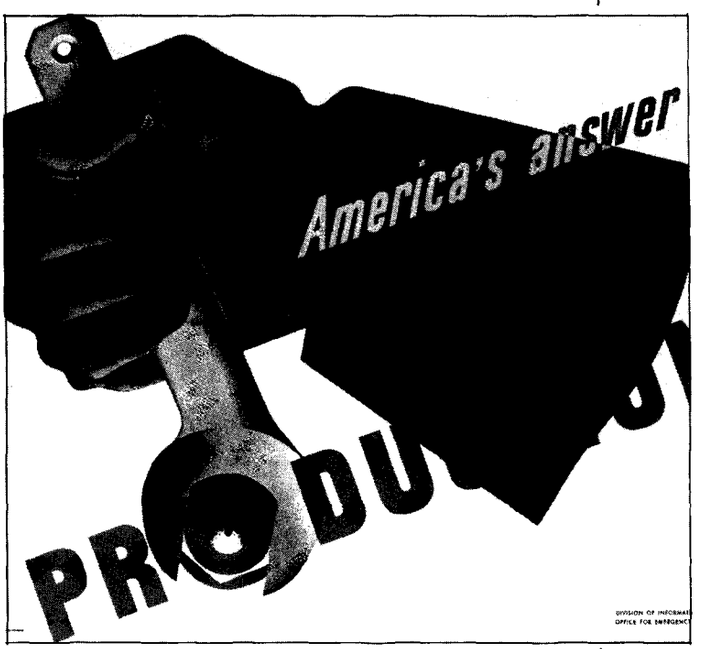
According to Porter, a number of advanced countries are approaching the wealth driven stage, but the situation in the UK is by far the worst. Indeed, the UK has been stuck in this stage of development for decades. Porter sees signs of renewal under the Thatcher government, but argues that these have been mainly in the form of short-term restructuring and cost-cutting. While there has also been a fair amount of foreign investment in the UK, it has been largely in assembly facilities taking advantage of low-wage, mostly unskilled labour. For a secure economic future what is required is innovation. This, he claims, has been noticeably lacking.

For each of the countries examined in this book, Porter proposes an agenda for change. For the UK he lays particular stress on education and industrial financing. He welcomes the new core curriculum in schools, but argues that without massive new funding it will be a failure. This is surely correct. He also claims that long-term investment in the UK is seriously inhibited by the city of London, whose institutions are concerned primarily with short-term financial gain. This is also correct. Unfortunately, he has little to say about how the situation can be altered.

A striking feature of Porter's work is his stress on the nation. Competition is becoming increasingly global in nature and multinational corporations increasingly dominant.

Many commentators believe this is undermining the economic identity and importance of nations. Porter takes just the opposite view: 'Companies, not nations, are in the front line of international competition. They must increasingly compete glo-bally. Yet globalisation does not supersede the importance of the nation.... With fewer impediments to trade to shelter uncompetitive domestic firms and industries, the home nation takes on growing significance because it is the source of the skills and technology that underpin competitive advantage.'

This is a surprising and important conclusion, although I personally am not entirely convinced.●



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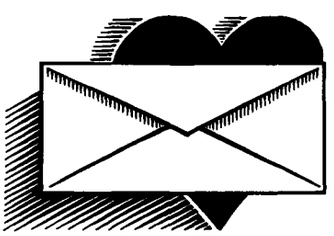

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● **Golders Green, Hendon, Finchley MT readers group.** Contact 081-455 1616.

● **National: A Friday Evening Marxism** Today Debate on 'Europe after the Berlin Wall' with Jan Urban of Civic Forum and others will open the 'Futures' event, in London, October 26/27. If you would like to be involved contact Geoff Andrews on 071-251 4406/0865-722512.

● **Haringey: 'Left and Rights'.** Discussion on citizenship, socialism and democracy. With Caroline Ellis of Charter 88's National Council and Geoff Andrews, editor of a forthcoming book on Citizenship. Tuesday October 23, 7.45pm at Hornsey Library, Haringey Park, Crouch End, London N8. Organised by Haringey Marxism Today Group, info: 081-348 8915.

● **Manchester: 'The Euroconference'.** Manchester Marxism Today Group is organising this major European day of discussion covering 1992, end of the cold war, federalism and much more. Takes place at Manchester Town Hall, Saturday February 23, 1991. Info: 061-445 6333/434 8930.

● **Leeds: 'Beyond Thatcherism'.** A Leeds Marxism Today Event, on Saturday November 3. Full details from 0532-6263343.

● **North London: Two Marxism Today events** planned for 1991, a Gramsci centenary seminar, and a major day event on sexual politics. Help and ideas on both most welcome, please write to North London MT Forum, c/o 28 Wargrave Avenue, London N15 6UD.

● **Cardiff: Active Marxism Today Group** continues to meet on the second Monday of each month. Details from Peter, 0222-227255.

MESSAGES

● **Single, 29-year-old male,** native American/European, seeks correspondence. I have a wide range of interests, e.g., politics, science, human rights, law, dream interpreting. Status: Prisoner. Please write: Dominic Olivo, 901187, PO Box 520, Walla Walla, Washington, USA 99362-0520.

● **In memoriam.** Samson, Peter. October 17, 1922 – September 7, 1989. The changes you lived through and worked for made you the person we love and miss so deeply. Suzanne, John, Peter, Robin, Nicola, Jen and grandchildren.

● **The YCL.** Were you ever involved? Would you respond to a questionnaire? Contact Mike Waite, Sociology Department (Post Grad), University of Lancaster, LA1 4YW.

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We are looking for help in developing our sales, promotion and marketing. Volunteers are required to assist with all sections of sales and distribution – newstrade, subscriptions and bookshops. There are also exciting new projects which will require assistance; overseas sales, student network and indexing. Volunteers need have no experience, just lots of energy and bundles of ideas.

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Promotions: Tracy Bass, Neville Dack, Bella Mansfield, Joanna Sumner, Ian Tucker.

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Helen Storey

Helen Storey was born in London in 1959. After graduating in fashion at Kingston Polytechnic, she spent two years in Rome working for designers Valentino and Lancetti. She returned to London to launch her own label and open her shop in Soho. In 1989 she was nominated for the Young Designer of the Year Award and Best Eveningwear Designer. Her designs project sex and power. Women she dresses include Madonna, Cher and Bananarama

What newspapers do you take? The *Independent*, The *Sunday Times*, *Elle*, *Vogue* and others in my industry.

What foreign languages do you speak? Italian.

What is your favourite tv programme? I hardly watch it.

When do you listen to music? Whenever I can and as often as I can.

When was the last time you prayed? When I saw Brian Keenan's face after his release.

What was your first thought this morning? That if I didn't get up that moment I wouldn't do at all.

Do you have a recurring dream? Not really but childhood ones are recurring at the moment.

What is the most common colour in your wardrobe? All colours but I hardly wear anything which will get me noticed. I hide behind black, grey and white.

What is your favourite meeting place? Bar Pacé (Rome). The only place I've ever been thrilled to go to.

Which piece of architecture moves you to either heaven or hell? Most of new London I consider to be bad architecture. Buildings have to be around for a long time before I believe they should be there. My favourite pieces of architecture are Gaudi's houses in Barcelona.

Who do you reveal your secrets to? A group of women friends, my husband and recently myself.

What makes you feel secure? Security comes in temporary waves, not usually long-lived.

How regularly do you consult your horoscope? Never.

What do you blame your parents for? In the end nothing, but I think they'd find that hard to believe.

When did you last visit your parents? Yesterday.

What do you envy about your child's lifestyle? Everything starting from when he was born.

What is your biggest regret? Not finding my true self earlier.

You're driving through a hot, desolate expanse. What's playing on the stereo? KD Lang, *Paris, Texas* by Ry Cooder, Julie Cruise.

Which is your city of the 90s? Barcelona. A city that by nature cannot escape its temperament and attempts to play the business game at the same time. I also love its heat and beauty.

Where is your favourite holiday destination? Eleuthra, an island in the Bahamas, but it's probably completely changed by now.

What physical exercise do you do? Waking up.

Under what circumstances would you use private medicine? If any of my family's lives were at risk – mentally or physically.

At what age do you want to stop working? Never.

Do you really need your car? Yes, to get to nursery.

Do you own shares? Only in myself.

What is your favourite advertisement? Peugeot cars, to the song *Take My Breath Away*.

What are you doing for the environment? Buying lead-free petrol, green household things, using recycled paper and not over-eating.

What part of this life would you take into another life? My son Luke and everyone I love.

Who do you respect? People who are true to themselves.

What do you no longer believe in? Governments.

What would you die for? My son Luke.

What current campaign do you most support? Fashion Acts, a fashion industry initiative to raise £1m for Aids research and people with Aids.

What do you now own that you had never dreamed of owning? A son.

What single thing has most influenced or changed your life? Remembering.

What is the largest amount of money you've spent on an item of clothing? Probably never more than £100. I have always liked second-hand and old clothes more than modern. New clothes don't reflect me and never have.

What hi-tech device scares you? Does the button for the 'big bomb' count?

How much time do you spend each day on the phone? I'm on the phone every five minutes to somebody. It's just part of another day.

Under what circumstances would you support censorship? To protect children and to uphold civil rights.

Are you paying your poll tax? I pay it to stay out of court, not because I condone it.

What makes you feel guilty? Compromise.

Complete this sentence: If I were dictator for a day... I'd give the job to someone else.

How much more do you want to achieve? I'm setting no limits.●

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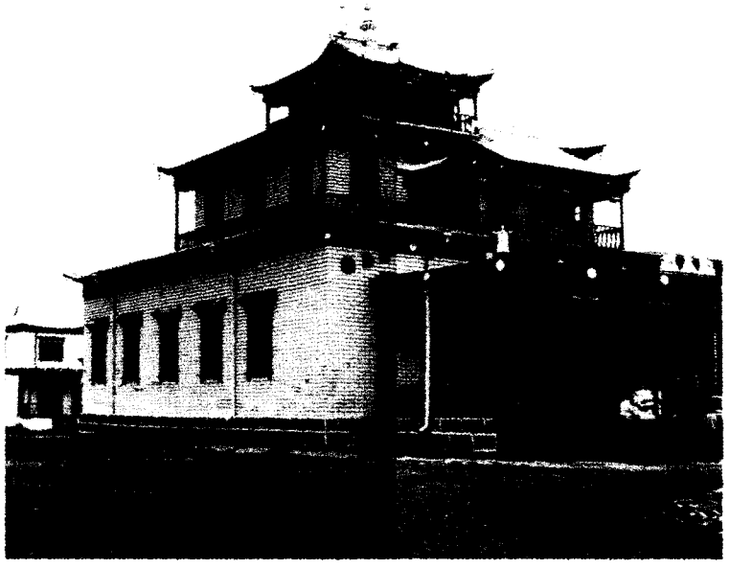
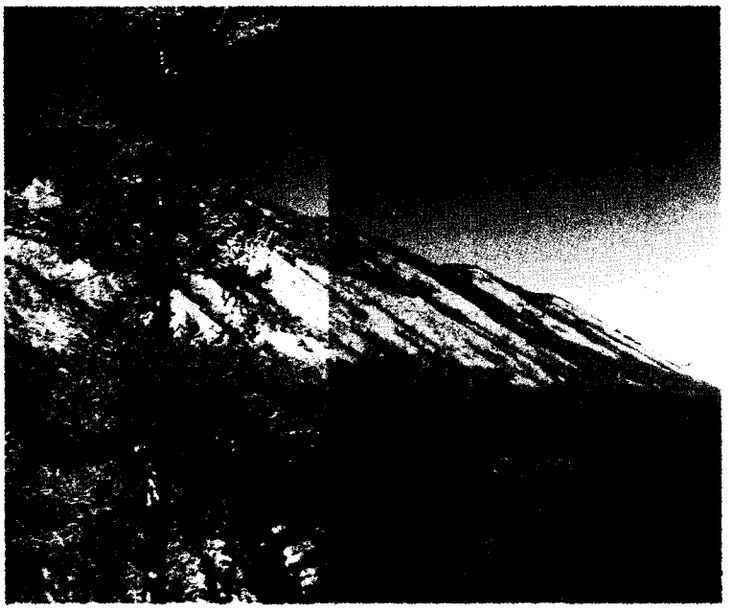


Buddhist monastery in Ulan-Ude, Eastern Siberia



Lake Baikal near Severo

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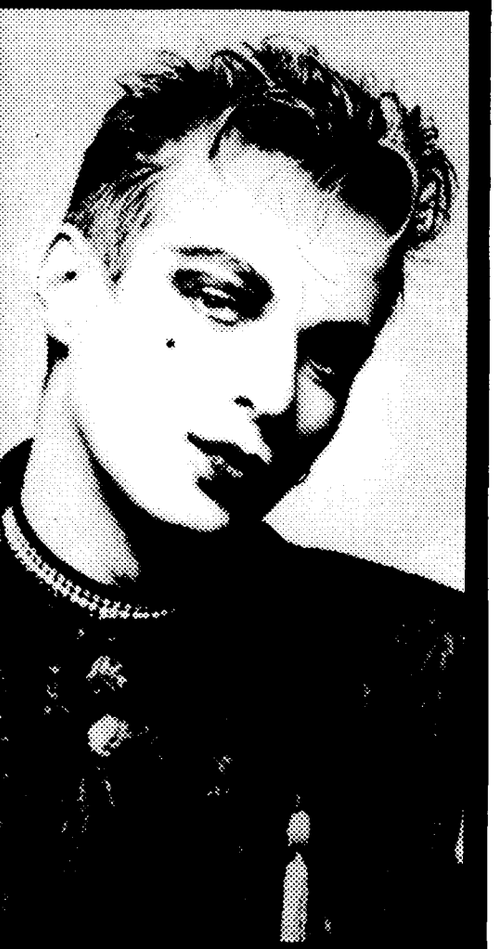
Carl Miller has a Sticky Moment with TVs JULIAN CLARY



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